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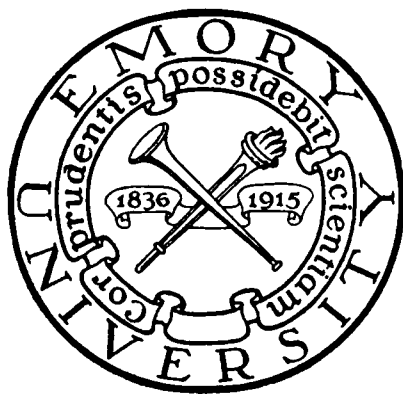
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PREFACE.

MR. ARTHUR SCRATCHLEY,

SIR,—In course things is werry different now with me to what they did used to be, and as to your a-wishin' to 'ave me tell you about things as I remembers, the same as I know'd a party as wrote a book thro' bein' rum-in-is-senses, as made it werry interestin' No doubt I could say a good deal, but for mussy sake don't let Brown know nothink about it, for he always says as I 'ears with my ears and understands with my elbers, as the sayin' is, but that's 'is ways as I don't mind; and as to knowin' things that I do, for I'm sure as there's a-many as lives and dies in London and never sees nothink on it; for there was my own aunt on the mother's side, as lived in the same 'ouse over fifty year, near Paddin'ton Green, and never see London Bridge, and died 'appy in 'er bed arter all, and so I'm sure I might 'ave done, only thro' Brown bein' that partial to a 'outin' now and then as would take me at times when we was both a 'ard

workin' couple, with werry little money to spend, and it's as well as I did go about then, for I'm sure since we've been better off Brown 'ave been that took up with foreign parts, as I do believe I shall soon forget my native tongue, as the sayin' is, but in course never can my English as is that good as it won't never spoil, and in course I shall be 'appy for to say my say about London, tho', in my opinion, it's bein' spilte rapid. What with their 'Obun Walleys and Tems Embankments, let alone the Undergrounded Railway, as were nearly my end.

I'm sure when I see as Smithfield 'ad been done away with, it give me quite a turn, and no more 'angin's in public, as is a good thing; and they talks of doin' away the Lord Mare, and pullin' down Temple Bar, and 'ave done away with St. Thomas's 'Ospital over in the Boro', and been and turned it into a railway, and I'm told is a pullin' down the Irish Church, and a lot more in the City, and werry soon will do away with 'em all over England too, thro' Queen Wictoria a-takin' to the Quakers, as always was a quiet lot, and not give to swearin'

So as I were a-sayin', it's as well as I 'ave seen what I 'ave seen, as can bear testimony to a many things as will be soon clean forgot, the same as the

turnpike gates, as is all done away with in one night, and 'ackney coaches, and the watchmen as I well remembers, and even parish lamps as was ile, and never give no light, but darkness wisible, as the sayin' is.

As to the price of things, some was dearer and others cheaper than they are now. For in them days wittles and drink and 'ouse rent was low priced, and fall-lalls was dear, as is quite different now, as is bad, in my opinion, for the workin' man as 'ave a family to feed, and only turns the 'eads of a parcel of shop boys, and servant gals, as don't know their place, and dresses out of their stations, and brings many a one to ruin, as is things I don't 'old with.

Not as I'm one to speak ag'in progress, as Brown calls it, but I says, be sure as you're a-progressin' right, and not do like Emily Tamplin, as lived along of old Mrs. Edges, out Chelsea way, as took and washed all the picter-frames with soap-and-water, with 'er missus gone to Margate, and spilte the lot, and like old Mr. Coshem, as pulled down the garding wall all in a 'urry, as were that strong as to be blasted with powder, and then 'ad to build it up ag'in, and never could make it that strong as it were afore, as is not improvements in

my opinion, and never should do nothink in a 'urry, as is what led to Mary Ann Childers ravin' mad all night with toothache, a-rushin' as soon as it were daylight to Brick Lane for to 'ave it out, as were done by the 'prentis thro' 'is master not bein' up, as in course pulled out two wrong uns as was sound as rocks, and dragged 'er three times round the room in doin' it, and broke the instrument into the bargain, the same as I told young Streeter, as they wanted to cut 'is foot off thro' a-sprainin' 'is ancle. I says, "Don't you be in no 'urry over it, for tho' they're mighty clever with their cuttin's and carvin's, remember tho' one doctor may cut it off, ten thousand couldn't put it on ag'in." So I says, "Don't you have it done;" as right my words proved, for I see 'im with my own eyes a-dancin' like a whirlwind, in a black welwet coat and 'is 'air curled at the 'Sembly Rooms, Margate, without 'is crutches, and not so much as a limp about 'im. So I think I may say as I knows what's what, as shall ever be 'appy to speak as I find, as I considers it a duty to, and I remain,

Your obedient,

X

MARTHA BROWN.

'er mark

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MRS. BROWN IN LONDON.



I.

HER VISIT TO THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

WELL, I'll tell you 'ow it 'appened as we come to go, for I'm sure it's not often as we did used to go out a-pleasurin' in them days as money were scarce, and Brown that irritable temperature, as it wasn't no pleasure to me.

But we was a-settin' a-dawdlin' over tea, as made us enjoy it, thro' the weather bein' that 'ot, and there's nothink like a cup of tea drunk bilin' 'ot to cool you, but 'ot it must be ; and as to sayin' it ruins your teeth, it's rubbish, tho' mine is gone in front ; but 'owever should tea 'urt the teeth ?

So as we was a-settin', I says to Brown, "Do you know what day Monday 'll be ?"

"No," he says.

"Guess," says I.

"Washin'-day," says he ; "for you're never 'appy but when you're up to your elbers in suds."

“Brown,” I says, and looks at ’im reproachful like, “if I was to be above the wash-tub where would your shirts be, which’ll keep their colour up to Friday, and look nice, and not over soiled Saturday, with none of your bleaching fluids, nor condiments, tho’ they do say as Queen Wictoria uses ’em in ’er own laundry; but, law, ’owever should she know, as leaves it all to lords and ladies, as don’t mind if their things is all burnt up, like the same as the frill of your best shirt were, as I put out for you, to ’ave it nice to see the Chairman of the Railway in, and come ’ome tinder, tho’ I did certingly think as I could ’ave trusted Mrs. Boddy with untold gold, thro’ ’er bein’ a Moravian, but leaves everythink to that daughter of ’ern, as is always a-flauntin’ about in ’er crinoline, and would stand me out as a family wash may be got up in a drawin’-room thro’ machinery, all dressed out in fal lals, and showed me the pictur, which, as I said, may be all very well for royal families like the Lord Mayor, as patronizes it, but I shouldn’t half fancy the things as never gets between a good pair of wrists, nor wrung and dried natural. Oh no, give me honest labour, which brings no blush on the bròw.”

So I says, “Brown, why, don’t you remember we’ve been man and wife three-and-twenty years on Monday;” but ’e’d got ’is pipe, and so didn’t give no answer, but only nods.

"Well," I says, "dear me, 'ow time do pass, it seems like yesterday as our Nancy was born, and now she's the mother of two, tho' I never did 'old with 'er marryin' so young, and that man; for tho' he is steady and fond of 'is 'ome, there's a look with 'is eyes as I don't trust, thro' the cunnin' man as told me where my lace veil was when I lost it, ah! to the very spot, he told me to beware of a party with red whiskers and a squint, which I 'olds Nancy's 'usband to 'ave both, tho' she was quite short when I said so."

Ah! poor thing, she'll find 'im out, as many other'as done; but as I was a-sayin', Brown made no remarks about Monday bein' our weddin'-day, but goes on a-smokin'

So I says, "Brown," and I gives a cough, "what partickler unpleasant tobacker you are a-smokin' "

He says, "It's the same as I've been a-smokin' of these seven years; but if it's disagreeable, I'll put it down, for I shall get a pipe by and by at the Catherine Wheel."

I says, "No, Brown," I says, "I'd rather be found a-chokin' on my own 'arthstone rather than it should be said, as I drove my 'usband from 'is fireside; but," I says, "I was only goin' to say, as I 'ad one wish as I should like to 'ave out afore I dies."

Brown says, "What's that?" quite short, tho' I 'ad spoke feelin' about afore I dies.

So, I says, "No matter, Brown; but, perhaps, you'll think of it when I am gone, that's all."

So says he, "How can I, if you don't tell me what it is?"

I did feel downright 'urt at Brown, and I says, "Ah! it's well to jest, but we're gone to-day and 'ere to-morrow."

Brown says, "Oh bother; what is it? Speak out."

So I says, "No matter; it was a simple, but not a sinful wish, and I am sorry as I spoke."

Then I see Brown a-shakin' his ashes out, and I know'd as that was a sign of 'is bein' ruffled, and goin' out.

So I says, "'Ave another pipe, Brown, it was only my nonsense about the bacca bein' strong."

But he was quite short, and said as he was a-goin' to——

So I goes on to say, "Well, Brown, I should like to go and keep our weddin'-day at the Jew-logical Gardens."

He says, "Oh bother the weddin'-day, but if you wants to see them wild beasts, I ain't no objections, and I'll take half a day Monday."

Well I was pleased; for I must tell you

I'm doatin' fond of annimals, thro' 'avin' been used to 'em all my life, for my brothers kep' rabbits, and our Joe was a pigeon-fancier, and I remembers 'avin' a Noah's ark give me, when quite a child, and what a spankin' my dear mother give me for lettin' Tommy, as was 'er youngest and went to sea, swallow the beadle, as were broader across the back than the helephant, and might 'ave been 'is death.

Brown, too, 'e's fond of live creatures, for I'm sure he used to treat our cat like a Christian, and bring 'im 'ome liver, as he were that partial to tho' always a weak stomick; and never did I see sich a cat, as almost spoke; and you never wanted a clock in the 'ouse, when the cats'-meat-man was comin' by, for he was out to meet 'im like a fellow-creature; and the way as 'e'd set and stare at me of a winter arternoon, if I let the kettle bile over ever so little, was downright wonderful.

I never can 'elp a-thinkin' as them Jackson boys 'ad a 'and in 'is death, not but what I could swear as he never touched their pigeons, tho' I must say as he would bring eatables in, as always made me think as 'e'd been trained to thievin' afore ever I 'ad 'im.

I was pleased when Brown said as we should go to see them beasts, and I really do think I quite counted the time till Monday came, and a glorious

mornin' it was, and Brown out a-doin' 'is bit of garden by six.

Well, we'd done breakfast before eight, and Brown went away cleaned up and all ready, as he can cover 'isself in black aprons at the docks ; and I must say he looked werry nice, for bein' a fine man clothes looks well on 'im, and he looks well in clothes, and with a brooch in 'is shirt, and a double-breasted waistcoat, which he got a bargain second 'and, not a soil on it, with yellow buttons as was shiny, and a werry nice coat, and so it ought to 'ave been, for he gave twelve-and-sixpence for it to a party as 'ad it from a gentleman's gardener, which is their priviliges werry often in 'igh families, jest like cooks with their grease pots.

Brown's got a noble forehead, which is the reason 'is 'ats always marks 'im so dreadful, and must be painful, tho' it looks well.

As soon as he was off, I set to work to put things straight, and get ready, and as the weather was so dreadful close and sultry, I thought as I'd wear a musling dress as I've got by me, it's a amber colour, and the pattern cabbage-leaves, and was quite the fashion ; but, law bless you, not only it wouldn't meet, but it was 'alf up my legs for shortness ; and so, Mrs. Blum comin' in, recommended me to take it off the body and wear the skirt with a clear musling jacket, as I've got trimmed with

Walenseens hedgin', and pink ribbons run thro', as Mrs. Blum 'ad to part with thro' her bein' a manty-maker, as lives next door but two, and works for parties as you'd think to look at was reg'lar West-Enders; and I'm sure you'd never believe as it was cotton velvet as she made up into a bonnet for Mrs. Parkin's little Emma.

So I consents reluctant to 'ave the skirt ripped off and set in a band, which so tumbled it, as I was obligated to put down a iron to smooth it out; and altogether, by the time as it was ready, I was dreadful 'ot, and it was nigh twelve o'clock, time to meet Brown at two o'clock at the Gardens, by way of the circuitous railway, as carries you from Stepney to the 'Ampstead Road.

I was that put out with doin' that dress, as I quite forgot to put on a potato to 'ave with a bit of cold meat, and really I didn't seem to 'ave no appetite, so I took in 'alf a pint of ale when the boy come round with the twelve o'clock beer, which I seemed to relish with a crust o' bread and cheese, and by that time Mrs. Blum came in ag'in to 'elp me on with my dress; and really when she put on that gownd, if I wasn't ashamed of myself, for it stuck out every way, with a deep flounce as would keep a-flyin' up thro' that crinoline as she persuaded me to 'ave, and seemed to me that clear as might be seen thro'; and Mrs. Blum said I did ought to 'ave 'ad a

white slip under to 'ave showed proper, but as I says never mind, sandal shoes always looks dress any'ow; but, law bless you, the musling jacket it tickled me dreadful, and was so tight in the arm-'oles, and so puffed out, as I didn't seem to be able to see my feet at all.

I 'ad a werry nice parrysole, with pink linin' and fringe, only it would shet up constant, with a bendin' 'andle, and a slide as would keep a-slippin' and fallin' over, and pinched my fingers dreadful.

I says to Mrs. Blum, "The evenin's is chilly, so I'll take my shawl over my arm with my ridicule," and I says, "Mrs. Blum," says I, "what's your opinion about rain?"

"Well," says she, "I'm duberous, for the new moon come up werry much on 'er back, and my feet 'as been werry troublesome these two days, and both is certain signs of a change."

I were that 'ot that really I don't think as I could 'ave carried my umbrella, for it was that 'eavy, tho' a alpaca; and as it was I felt dreadful fluttery, so I says to Mrs. Blum, says I, "I think I ought to take a somethink afore startin' "

She says, "It's a duty," and so we did; and I says to 'er, "You'll step in and 'ave the kettle on the bile about six, as we shall be 'ome by that at latest; and you're a good soul, and won't mind a-

waitin' for your tea till six, which a egg and bacon will relish."

So I leaves the key in 'er charge, as she were agreeable to, and then, all of a flutter, off I set, and as the Stepney station ain't far from our 'ouse, I walked on there at leisure, and jest in time to see a train start.

So I says to a young gentleman as stared at me werry 'ard thro' a 'ole where he give the tickets, "The next train to 'Ampstead?"

Says he, "Twenty minutes."

"Well," says I, "then, if you please, for 'Ampstead."

He says, "Very well, two shillin's;" and gives me four bits o' cardboard.

"Two shillin's!" says I, "I was told it were sixpence."

"So it is," says he.

"Well, then," says I, "why two shillin's?"

"Don't you want four tickets?" says he.

"Law, no," says I, "only one."

"Oh, bother," says he, and sweeps away the three tickets and my sixpence.

Well, there, I set a-waitin' on a bench, and the air a-blowin' so pleasant, but I was that afeard of a chill, as I crossed the road to a werry genteel 'ouse, where I took the least drop with peppermint, as I only 'ad time to swaller when I 'eard the bell a-

ringin', as showed the train a-comin', and I 'urried up them stairs that abrupt, that when I got to the top I was graspin' for breath; and if one of the porters 'adn't pushed me into a carriage, I don't think as ever I should 'ave got into the train at all.

I was whisked along, as I may say, as sudden as steam, with jerks as was tremendous, and throwed me forards into a stout party in widder's weeds, as received me unawares on the 'orn 'andle of her umbrella, and if my front tooth 'adn't been knocked out three years afore, thro' a clothes prop a-fallin', it certainly would 'ave been by that umbrella of 'er'n.

I went on and on in that railway, but as to 'earin' what they said when they 'ollered out the stations, it was out of the question, and felt too giddy to read anythink; so at last they stops, and says, "Change 'ere for Kew and 'Ounslow."

"For where?" says I.

"For Kew," says the man.

"Why, I wants 'Ampstead," says I.

"Then," says he, "you've come past it, and must wait 'ere 'arf an 'our for a return train."

It was that aggravatin' for it was jest on two when I did ought to 'ave been meetin' Brown at the Gardens, and I'd rather 'ave lost a shillin' than kep' 'im waitin'.

So, as there was no 'elp, I set under a sort of

shed, with the sun so strong, that tho' I 'ad my parryssole up, I was quite blisterin', jest like the paint; and as to the pitch, it was that melted as it spoilt my gloves, and stuck to my dress, only thro' touchin' a palin' as I passed.

I do think I should 'ave died of 'eat if the train 'ad been much longer; and when it come, and I got in, there was a large and merry party as was out for the day thro' a weddin' in the family; and I do think I must 'ave gone off only one of the ladies undid me, for really I couldn't bear myself thro' Mrs. Blum a-tightenin' me in so, as I told 'er I couldn't stand; and I really were thankful for a little refreshment as they offered—oh! quite genteel, in a clean medicine bottle, as nobody would think was otherwise.

Well, this time I wouldn't be wrong, so I asks one of the gentlemen, as were very friendly, to look out for me; and so he did, or else it's my opinion as I should 'ave gone back to Stepney.

When I was got out of the train, and thankin' them werry much for their kindness, I was told to turn to the left and keep straight over Primrose 'Ill; and so I did; but why they need a' sent me up to the top of the 'ill, only to come down ag'in, I can't make out, as I was directed by two young gentlemen as was a-smokin' on a seat; and certainly I was a-smokin' too, and the path was that pebbly as I got

my shoes full, and was obligated to set down and take 'em off and shake 'em out, so it was werry near 'alf past three thro' missin' my way as I got to the Gardins gate.

There was Brown a-lookin' daggers, as the sayin' is, but I checks 'im by my looks, and sayin' the least thing will send me off, and so it would; and really I was obligated to set down on a form as struck red 'ot, where porters was a-waitin' as called the carriages.

Brown says, "Martha," says he, "why, wherever 'ave you been?" but I 'adn't the power to say nothink, and he brings out a small, flat, glass bottle, and really I did put my lips to it thro' bein' improvided with a glass, and in my 'urry I'd forgot my egg cup, and Brown, in 'is vulgar way, says, "Well, you 'ave dipped your beak in pretty deep," which really wasn't true, for I'd only took it medicinal.

When I'd rested myself a bit, we started into the Gardins, where the path was as pebbly as they was across that Primrose 'Ill, when all on a sudden I says to Brown, "Whatever's that?" for I see a hanimal up in the hair, suspended like.

"Why, a bear," says he.

"A bear," says I; and sure enough it were a bear a-clutchin' on to a 'igh sort of a prop, and takin' of buns as parties gave 'im from a poll.

"Brown," I says, "it's my opinion as he's goin' to spring."

A lady as 'ad three werry nice children with her says, "Oh dear no, mum, he can't do that, thro' 'is bein' domesticated below, and if you'll step up 'ere you'll see."

Well, up I stands, and was a-leanin' over, when a gentleman says, "Take care, mum, as you don't topple over, like the babby as the nursemaid let fall last month in among that den of quadrupeds, and see it devoured under 'er nose, before 'uman 'elp could interfere."

So I says, "Brown," I says, "take me down," for I couldn't bear to see the wretches arter that, and parties encouragin' them thro' buns.

We walks over a sort of bridge, and I 'ears a roar as seemed to go thro' me, and Brown says, "Do you hear him?"

"Hear who?" says I.

"The lion," says Brown, "and we're jest in time," says he, "to see 'im fed."

I says, "Not on live creatures, I 'opes," for I wouldn't see any one tore up by them brutes, which is there 'abits, as we knows in books, tho' well that boy deserved it, thro' tellin' of lies, and runnin' away to sea.

But Brown says, "It's all right;" and we went down, and a gentleman made room for me to stand

on a bench, as I wouldn't 'ave done for the world, only there was parties in front as kep' my musling all right, tho' short.

Law, such a sight as it were to see them creatures a-snuffin' and a-tearin' about, and the way as they shook the werry bars in anger when they see their wittles a-comin' in a barrer, as looked a gory mask.

I says, "Well, I think they might as well give it 'em cooked, for it's only a-encouragin' 'em in their beastly ways, a-givin' of 'em what can't be 'olesome."

The way as them brutes took 'old of the bits of meat give me quite a turn, for it would 'ave been all the same to them, no doubt, if it 'ad been Christians as they was a-devourin'

I says, "Brown," I says, "I've seen enough; but," I says, "I will take a drain fust, for that raw meat 'as downright turned me."

So we moved on to where the 'ieners was a-laughin' fit to kill theirselves, as is their natures to, but what at I couldn't think; it must 'ave been their own thoughts, or at the white bear, poor thing! as lived in a cistern close by, yet seemed a-dyin' of thirst, which of course water will not quench, as I always says, partickler in them as always is a-livin' in it, any more than we could live on hair.

Well, we passes on thro' many strange crea-

tures, and see a camel, as I considers, a mask of deformity, and was a-goin' on thro' a sort of tunnel, when what should we meet but a helephant quite at large.

It give me such a turn, for if he 'adn't got children on his back, as I thought as he were a-carryin' off to his den for to devour alive, thro' 'is 'avin' that strength as nothink can't defy.

So I 'ollers out, and back I goes sudden, for to make a bolt, as the sayin' is, and in my fright throwed down two little gals and their ma un-awares, as made the good gentleman with 'em savage, as called me a 'itapperbotermus, tho' 'umbly a-askin' pardon, and 'urt myself a-comin' down but on them pebbly paths.

Well, when I was picked up, a lady says, "Afeard of a helephant? 'ow ridiculous."

"Well," I says, "that's as parties thinks," but I've lost them as was near and dear, by wild beasts, thro' 'avin' a uncle as were gored by a bull; and so she goes forard with 'er bounce, and werry nigh got stepped on by the helephant, and was 'urt by parties a-scrougin', as made 'er 'oller, not as the helephant meant no 'arm, for he was as tame as lambs, and did anythink as 'is keeper told 'im to, pickin' up sixpence quite natural, like a Christian, with what they called 'is trunk, which I 'olds must 'ave been 'is tail, tho' it do grow in front;

but them foreign creatures is so strange in their ways.

We see snakes as was in glass cases, and might as well be stuffed, in my opinion, for all the good they was alive.

And, dear 'eart, them two 'ipanbottomuppermus is surprisin', as was a-flounderin' about in water, and some spotted creatures with long necks and legs, as kep' a-starin' at 'em from over the palin's next door, quite surprised at their ways as I was, for the splashin' as they made covered me with their nasty mud, thro' me a-standin' near them unawares, and glad I was to get a seat, and look at 'em steady, not as there was anythink to look at in such brown-paper porpuses, as I calls 'em.

Well, when we was rested a bit, we walked back, and thankful I was, as Brown 'ad 'ad the thought to bring some refreshments in.

After we took some, we was werry much scrouged in gettin' to see the monkeys, creatures as I don't 'old with, for the place was stiflin', and the way as they was a-leapin' and a-rushin' about quite terrified me, not as you'll ever perswade me as they're not next door to 'uman bein's, as it is clear from what I see with my own eyes, in two foreigners as was a-standin' lookin' at 'em as like as two peas.

Well, there was a old monkey as seemed more serous like and quiet than the others, and he was a-

lookin' at a little one's 'ead very attentiv', and I says, "Law, Brown," says I, "there's innocency, for all the world like their fellow-creatures," and I points at 'im with my parrysole.

I'd 'ardly said the words, whether 'e'd 'eard 'em or not I couldn't tell, but if he didn't dash 'is long 'airy arms thro' the wires, and seizes me by the bonnet, when the other little one grabs at my parrysole, and I was all confusion.

I 'eard fools a-laughin' all around, and the beast a-chatterin' and pullin' wiolent at my bonnet, as the cap-strings gives way, thro' bein' slender, and the ribbins undone for coolness, and away goes my bonnet, cap, 'air and all, tore thro' the bars in a instant, and up aloft, where the other was a-sittin' and pickin' my parrysole to bits, with Brown's nose a-streamin' down with the scratch as he got a-tryin' to rescue me.

I never did feel so wild, and I could 'ave cried with vexation, and would have tied my pocket 'andkercher over my 'ead, only it was full of gooseberries, as I 'ad bought to refresh me ; and what do you think ? Why if the fellow as kep' the monkeys, and is in with them, it's my opinion, in their ow-dacious doin's, for they can be taught anythink, if he didn't say as I must 'ave been a-pokin' at 'em with my parrysole, a thing as I'd scorn to do ; but, bless you, I'd 'ad that fright as I was palpitatin' all

over, a-quiverin' like a harrer, and 'ow I got out of the place I can't tell, for I turned dead faint, and what I got left of my bonnet, pins couldn't do nothink with, tho' the lady in the cloak-room tried her uttermost.

I shouldn't 'ave got 'ome at all, only, luckily, Brown's yellow silk 'andkercher, as was clean, proved a protection for my 'ead as far as the gate, which I couldn't 'ardly reach to, and if we 'adn't 'ad a cab to the railroad, I never would 'ave gone thro' the jeerin' remarks.

I did manage to do just a somethink with my bonnet in the train, so as to walk down our street decent; and when Mrs. Blum see us 'ard upon eight o'clock, she werry nigh went dead off, thro' 'avin' 'ad 'er misgivin's about them wild beasts, as she says, do not ought to be so situated as to 'ave the powers give 'em to 'arm parties.

Brown aggrawates me the most, for he will 'ave as it was my fault, thro' a-pointin' at the creatures with my parrysole.

So I says, "A pretty pass I'm come to, if I mayn't point at a monkey in a Christian country;" but it's no use a-talkin' to Brown, for he will 'ave 'is say, and so I let 'im; but I've only got to observe that I think it would be all the better, if them creatures was left alone over there where they lives, and then they could keep themselves to themselves, and

them as went among 'em, would only 'ave to expect what they got, which when you pay your money to see 'em, the least as they can do is to be civilized in their ways; but I've 'ad enough, and as the 'im book says, they may delight to bark and bite, but they don't get me there to do it to, no more, as am thankful as I'm alive to tell the tale.

II.

MRS. BROWN GOES TO SEE THE LORD
MAYOR'S SHOW

"LORD MAYOR'S SHOW ! Why, bless your 'eart, we should be scrouged to atoms, I know we should ;" them was my words to Mrs. Wilkins when she dropt in casual with 'er little Tommy and 'is sister Melia Ann.

"Well," she says, "I've promised the boy, tho' he don't ought to be 'umored thro' 'avin' worreted me pretty nigh to death ever since Sunday week, when he first 'eard on it thro' drinkin' tea with my married sister; and, law bless you, he's such a boy to ask questions, so there was no puttin' 'im off, and I says, Tommy, you shall go ; and if I could get you, Mrs. Brown, mum, to come, it would be company, for when you're out with children there ain't no talkin' to them."

"But," I says, "Mrs. Wilkins, mum, 'owever can you," I says, "go to see the Lord Mayor like that, not 'avin' your werry best on," I says ; and 'er replies was as she'd never be seen.

“ Well, then,” I says, “ it’s my opinion as you will, thro’ there bein’ crowds a-lookin’ on.”

“ But,” she says, “ no ; you’ll do just as you are,” she says, “ and we shall be back in no time to a early cup of tea with me,” she a-livin’ close down by me.

So knowin’ as Brown was not comin’ ’ome to ’is tea, and somehow feelin’ lonesome, I said as I’d go, but as I should like to tidy myself up a bit ; but, law bless you, she said as there wasn’t time, and to tell you the truth, I was not partickler anxious to leave ’er boy Tommy in my kitchen whilst I went upstairs for long ; for he’s a limb, he is, if ever I see one ; and only last Christmas, the way as he broke a cheyney shepherd off my parlour mantel-piece for the purpose, and spoilt the pair, is what I wouldn’t look over ; so a-takin’ off my collars as I was a-bilin’ down, I only got my bonnet and shawl, and off we went.

The mud was somethink curious in the Minories, and Aldgate Pump was quite crowded up, for we was to go up ’Oun’sditch to Bishopsgate Street, where there was to be a full view of the procession thro’ its bein’ the Lord Mayor’s own ward, as they calls it, tho’ I didn’t see anythink answerin’ to a ’ospital. But there wasn’t no gettin’ up ’Oun’sditch, for it was quite choked up with population.

So we turned back, and thro’ passin’ into Fen-

church Street we got along, but the scrugin' and shovin' was very unpleasant, thro' boys in troops a-comin' sudden behind you; and as to my dress, it was out of the gethers in no time, and my shoes trod down at 'eel at every turn.

We 'adn't got near the Mansion 'Ouse, where the perlice was that plentiful as to make stoppages frequent, so we went round by Cannon Street up to St. Paul's, and there the crowd were awful.

I never did see sich a sight—a reg'lar conquest of people, as I may say; and I was really warm thro' Mrs. Wilkins bein' one of them walkers as is always a-'urryin' on and there ain't no keepin' up with, and the way as she elbered parties, and the names as she were called by them as she run ag'in, was more than I could 'ave put up with; and then we got sich a turn, for jest as we was a-gettin' into St. Paul's Churchyard if we didn't miss Tommy; and, bless your 'eart, if Mrs. Wilkins didn't scream fearful, and what with 'ittin' Melia Ann, as 'ad bad eyes already, for losin' sight of 'er little brother, and stoppin' perlicemen to ask after 'im, we was reg'lar mobbed, and 'im all the while a-standin' up in a doorway, a-'idin' for the purpose.

I should like to 'ave give it 'im 'ot myself, only I never interferes with other people's children, when 'avin' 'ad to persecute two parties, as was neighbours, thro' me a-throwin' suds over boys as

would soil my door-step, and their mothers a-payin' me out ferocious with stones, and not a-leavin' a whole pane in the front parlour, and the magistrate a-sayin' as I didn't ought to 'ave took the law in my own 'ands.

A thing as I never thought of doin', only people will swear anythink; and when I see them two females, for I won't call them anythink else, tho' it is a expression as I don't 'old with,—when I see them kiss the book to that falsity, I very near dropt into the perliceman's arms.

I was afraid as they'd be struck, so which they most certainly would if the wind 'ad 'appened to change, a thing as may 'appen to any of us sudden, and should be a warnin', as I used always to tell my children.

So I told Tommy Wilkins; but his mother said as boys would be boys, and she really do indulge 'im that awful, thro' 'is 'avin' been that difficult to rear, and was took right off 'is legs thro' cuttin' 'is teeth thro' 'is loins, and 'avin' a natural club-foot, with eyes as 'ave been inflamed from the mouth, and never a 'ealthy babby in my opinion; and as it come out in conversations, she was only a-coaxin' 'im thro' the Lord Mayor's show up to the Opodeldic 'Ospital.

When she told me 'er game, I said I don't 'old with been two-faced, and as to opodeldic, I wouldn't

allow any child of mine to 'ave 'is eyes touched with anythink 'alf so irritatin', which I know it must be rubbed in, or benefits won't accrue; for when Brown 'ad that bad fall off the steps thro' 'angin' out for me, when there was frost as rendered things slippery, and caught by the clothes line, which, being brittle, give way in 'is 'and, I shan't ever forget the pains as I 'ad in my shoulders thro' rubbin' of it in with that fortitude as was necessary, and 'is groans fit to wake the dead.

So I says, "If that's your plans, then, Mrs. Wilkins, I 'ope as you don't expect me to stand by and see the boy slaughtered upon, for it's no other name as I can call it by, and wouldn't 'old down my worst enemy under similar inflictions, which was bad enough when Mrs. Dobson's finger, as 'ad a witloe, wouldn't supplicate, and the agony was scrutinizin', poor thing! and the sight of things like that goes to my 'eart, and the screams a-ringin' in my ears for days."

So I prevailed on 'er to turn back from that determination, knowin' well as Tommy would be partickler fractious and kick out, and nothink can be done thro' 'im 'avin' the pull with that clump foot of 'is, as I've felt the weight of on my own, as I may say was pulverisin', and 'ave known 'im set every one down, includin' 'is aged grandpa, as spoke kind to 'im; and to bring down his grey 'airs like

that, oh ! it went to my 'eart to witness, and nothink but bull's eyes to pacify 'im ; and cripple as he is, if he'd been a child of mine, I know what I'd 'ave reminded 'im as he was flesh and blood.

Well, it was werry easy to say turn back, but, law bless you, the streets seemed to be quite overflown with the populous, and the way as parties was draggled, made me feel quite low, and thankful as I 'ad on my pattens, for tho' Mrs. Wilkins did ridicule the idea, and 'ad ingyrubber gloses on, I says " No ; wood and iron is good enough for me," and so they was, and kep' me out of the mud, with a firm footin' wherever I trod, as proved a leetle too strong for one party, as I stood on accidental, and got a shove, as might 'ave proved fatal in throwin' me under the wheels of busses, only the thoro'fare was stopped, and so was I thro' fallin' against a old gentleman as was protrudin' from a doorway ; and really some people must be born cross grain'd, for you wouldn't believe it, he didn't seem at all pleased at havin' broke my fall, tho' I'm sure 'is buttons was like flint to my face.

I was a-sayin' to Mrs. Wilkins, " Owever are we to get along," when I got a shove from a perliceman, tho' I was a-walkin' in the middle of the street, where there was plenty of room.

He says, " Stand back," and so I did ; but bein' forced on to the pavements as was lined, the rude-

ness as parties showed was quite degradin', and the remarks as they made personal, thro' my bein' rayther stout for a crowd.

Some wanted to know if I was a-goin' to stop the way altogether, and one pushed and the other shoved; and some one said, "Please don't stand in front of my little gal," till I was passed down the ranks ever so far, and missed Mrs. Wilkins, just as there was a cry, "'Ere they comes," and mounted perlicemen a-bearin' down on me, with milintary music and flags a-flyin'

I says, "Let me thro'," and give that plunge as forced parties to give way and let me on to the pavement in 'opes of standin' room.

But, law bless you, it was reg'lar wedgewood work, and as I was strugglin', if there didn't come rushin' along a crowd of waggerbones, a-'ollerin' and a-shovin', as turned me round quite sudden, and some laid 'old on me and run me along involuntary like for yards, a-turnin' my ankle repeated, and losin' one of my pattens for good and all, and as powerless as a infant, and people a-grinnin' like fools, and the perlice not a-carin' in consequence of their duty bein' to lock arter the Lord Mayor, as was quite able to take care of 'isself I'm sure, for if he can't, thro' bein' a magistrate, who ought to.

Where I should 'ave been run to there's no tellin', only a crowd come rushin' in opposition and

stopped me so ded and sudden, as turned me sharp ag'in a doorway where a lady was a-standin' up for shelter.

I've felt a deal, and gone thro' a great deal in my time, but never did I feel so near my end as when I scrouched into that corner of the doorway, which 'appened to be a wine vaults.

I 'adn't no breath left in me, and was that 'eated, as I can't express, so I makes a effort, and goes into the wine vaults, which was crowded oppressive. I was lucky in bein' served at all, tho' all I took was a little warm ale, with ginger as a comfort, and no spirits to speak of, for I'd touched nothin' since my breakfast, and was 'urried thro' Brown goin' off in a bustle to catch 'is train in goin' out for the day, so I eat a 'eart cake, in which the butter were, p'r'aps, the fullest flavoured as I ever tasted.

So 'earin' as the show were a-comin' close by, I swallows down my ale, and was as near choked as could be, thro' the merest drop a-goin' the wrong way, and got to the door in time to see the best of the procession.

It certingly was awfully grand to see them watermen in crowds, a-staggerin' under their flags, and parties on 'orseback unsteady, thro' the animals a-bein' so festive and irritated by the music, which the volunteers was emittin' constant in their uniforms.

Then comes a shoal of men in armour, poor things, a-lookin' dreadful, as well they might, a-bein' kep' up all the year in the Tower of London, as a gentleman a-standin' by told me is the case, so well they may be stiff; and one poor fellow was all covered with mud, which the gentleman said was the dust of ages, and I do think they might as well keep 'em dusted.

Then there come more banners and more bands, as fluttered in the breeze, as the sayin' is, and then come carriages as looked quite exhausted, with the horses starved, and the coachmen and footmen that low as they 'adn't the sperrit to brush their 'ats, or even set upright, poor fellows.

Then comes the sheriffs, as 'angs the people in their gold chains, and serve 'em right, in my opinion.

Last of all, come the Lord Mayor 'isself, as were awful grand, a-settin' a-'oldin' a large thing as looked like a gold bed-post cut short, and a 'ead of 'air as was well calculated to resist the weather, settin' as he were with 'is face to the winder, as every one might see their lawful suv'rin, as he is in the City; for you know he can shut the gates of Temple Bar slap in the Queen's own face, and he'd do it too, in course, as in duty bound, if she was comin' it too free in the City.

For as the gentleman says to me, "Law bless

you, it wouldn't never do to 'ave 'er a-drivin' constant thro' Cheapside, which ain't her dominions."

When the crowd was a little bated, I stepped out of the doorway, and was a-goin' to thank the gentleman as 'ad stood close by me all the time, a-tellin' me heverythink, and kep' 'is cape half over me, as felt very comfortable, but he'd gone off quite sudden.

So I steps on briskish, as I felt damp about my feet, as it wasn't possible to walk with one patten, so I took it off, and carried it, as it might come in handy.

When I got on thro' the City, I was a-thinkin' as I should like to take home a quarter of a pound of tea from Fenchurch Street, and I enters the shop, as I've know'd for years, and always wanted to try them teas as is marked in the windows, so I says to the young gentleman as were behind the counter, as I'd trouble him for a quarter of a pound of the best at 3s., he weighs it out, and brushes the counter into it, and all reg'lar as I always think a dirty 'abit, tho' loth to lose the tea as is spilt; meanwhile, I was a-feelin' for my puss, which is a moleskin as I've carried for luck ever since I've kept 'ouse, with a nutmeg and a bit of bees-wax, and my thimble, when, lo! you might 'ave knocked me down with a feather, for it was gone. Gone!—yes—took clean out of my pocket, as is that deep it's a trouble even to one

to get to the bottom of, and stout nankeen double stitched, as nothing could slip out of; so I must have been robbed, and there was a lucky sixpence in it, too, as was my grandmother's, as I wouldn't have lost for nothink was it ever so, with seven and ninepence in hard money, five shillin's as was savin's, and two and ninepence out of ten shillin's I'd 'ad of Brown on Monday for 'ousekeepin'

It give me such a turn, and I was that vexed as I couldn't hardly speak, when, luckily, I remembered I'd a shillin' and some halfpence, as I got tied in the corner of my pocket 'andkercher, as I took in change out of a florin, when I 'ad my ale and ginger. Well, I was that flurried as I couldn't get the knot undone for ever so long, and the young man was very free in his ways, for he tells me to look slippy, words as I don't 'old with from a stranger.

So I says, "Don't you make too free, young fellow," and throws down the shillin', and catches up my tea quite sudden, and was leavin' the shop when he 'ollers out, "Hallo! old woman, this won't wash."

"Whatever do you mean," says I; "who wants it to?"

"None of your gammon," says he.

"What do you mean?" says I.

"Give me the tea," says he.

"I shan't," says I.

"You shall," says he.

"I've paid for it," says I.

"You haven't," says he.

"You've got the money you purged young villain," says I.

"It's a duffer," says he.

"What's all this," says the owner of the shop, a grey-headed man, as looked quite respectable.

"Why," says the young fellow, and I could 'ave tore his eyes out that I could, "this old woman 'as been tryin' to pass bad money, and it's my opinion she's been a-drinkin' "

Flesh and blood is weak and sinful, but it will break down sometimes; and I was that enraged as I couldn't hardly keep my 'ands off 'im, and I says, "Take your beastly tea;" and I throw'd it slap at him. "I'll 'ave the law of you, you owda-cious——"

"Come, none of this," says the 'oary-headed old willain, "turn out;" and he takes me by the shoulder for to turn me out.

Says I, "Give me my money; don't rob as well as insult me, you wagabone."

Well, some parties stopped at the door, and I was a-tellin' a lady about 'ow I'd been treated, and up comes a perliceman a-pokin' of 'is nose in where he wasn't wanted, and says, "Move on."

I says, "I shan't till I've got my money from this 'ere den of villains."

"Move on, will yer," says he.

"No," says I; "keep yer hands off me, young feller, or p'r'aps you'll repent it," I says. "I ain't none of your cooks as you can make free with."

At this parties as was standin' by gives a laugh, and that seemed to put the perliceman's monkey up.

He says, "What's your caper, come?"

"Why," I says, "I wants my shillin'; for I wouldn't 'ave their rubbish of tea, not if they went on their knees to ask me."

"Your money," says the man of the shop, "is worse than my tea; for it's bad."

"Bad," I says, "that it ain't, you good-for-nothink bad-tongued man."

"Perliceman," says he, "take 'er in charge for passin' bad money; 'ere's the shillin';" and, law bless you, when I look'd at it, my 'eart misgive me; for it was downright lead to look at.

"Smasher, eh!" says the perliceman.

"I ain't," says I.

"Oh! ain't you," says he. "We'll see about that. Come along with me;" and if he didn't walk me off like a felon in the docks to the Station-'ouse. I do think I never should 'ave 'eld my 'ead up ag'in, thro' shame, if it 'adn't been as

we met Mr. Clayton, our butcher, as was a-passin' by, as I've dealt with ever since we've lived in our street, as will be seven years next Michaelmas, thro' our movin' there when Brown got 'is place in the Docks.

So I calls out "Mr. Clayton, sir," I says, "Mr. Clayton;" well he turns round sudden, and I tells him about the preliminary as I was in, so he says, "Don't be afraid, Mrs. Brown, mum, I'll stand by you;" which he did all the way to the Station-'ouse, where he spoke for me; and the tea man said as he didn't bear malice, and wouldn't press the charge if I'd apologize, and promise as it should not occur ag'in.

So I says to myself, "If ever I darken your door ag'in, I'm a Dutchman," and glad I was to get away, thro' it growin' dark, with a thick fog a-comin' up, as very nigh choked me all down Whitechapel, and I couldn't 'old up my head when I come to think of the outrageous way as I'd been treated, and I sobbed all the way to Mrs. Wilkins' door, thinkin' as a cup of tea would set me to rights, but, bless your 'eart, she was werry nigh two hours before she come in, thro' Tommy, as 'ad got 'is clump foot wedged in a gratin', over which he would walk, as he always will, and, really altogetther, that boy will come to a bad end; for if he didn't bust out a-larfin' when I told my tale, and talked about amashers

quite free, and his mother a-encouragin' 'im ; for I could see 'er a-smilin', tho' she made believe to shake her head and frown.

So I ups and speaks, and says, " Mrs. Wilkins, mum, you're a-makin' a rod for your own back with that boy, as you'll sup sorrow by ladlefuls thro' ; and mark my words," I says, " as speaks as a friend."

But, bless you, she was up, too, in a minute, and says, " Mum, bring up your family as you pleases, and let me alone with mine."

" Well," I says, " I'm sorry I spoke ; muck 'im you likes, and welcome, only don't say you wasn't told."

" Muck him, mum," says she ; " what do you mean by muck ?"

" What I says," says I.

" Well, then," says she, " as thems your opinions, p'r'aps, you'll be so good, mum, as to keep 'em to yourself."

" Ycs," I says, " mum ; and more than that, I'll keep myself to myself too ;" I draws my shawl round me, thro' bein' a-settin' in my bonnet, and I gets up to go.

I 'eard them all a-larfin' out loud as I went out, as shows me as Mrs. Wilkins is a-trainin' them up in the way as they didn't ought to go ; and tho' I don't bear no malice nor 'atred in my 'eart, it

will be a long while before you catches me a-goin' out anywhere with Mrs. Wilkins.

Not as I 'olds with Brown, as calls 'er low names in speakin', and when I told 'im about my losses at Lord Mayor's show, if he didn't say as it served me right for goin' to see sich tomfoolery.

"Well," I says, "Brown, you may be a Christian, and you may not, which I werry much doubts; but," I says, "as to Lord Mayor's show, I used to 'ave a uncle as waited at the dinner, bein' attached to one of the Company's; and he always said, as whenever Lord Mayor's day come to a end it would be a dark day for London, with p'r'aps a revolution, and p'r'aps we might see the streets of London a-runnin' with their own gore, for whoever is to keep them low-lived ruffians down as would take a pleasure in our 'art's blood if it wasn't for the Lord Mayor;" and 'avin' been in service myself, as were a alderman's family, in the name of Whittles, and see him in shorts, with a sword and lace ruffles. Of course, I did feel as Brown ought not to call Lord Mayor's show tomfoolery.

He's sich a one to go on thro' a-readin' them papers, where a party writes awful things about every religion, and I says to Brown, "Be a Jew," I says, "and throw up your pork, but don't," I says, "go ag'in what's right and proper;" but there's no talkin' to Brown, for when I was jest

a-goin' to break to 'im about me and the Station-'ouse, if he didn't begin to snore.

So all I've got to say is "What the eye don't see the 'eart don't grieve," and certingly, if I'd never 'ave seen that Lord Mayor's show, I should not 'ave grieved as I did for many a day ; not as I minded the loss of my patten, nor my puss, nor the cold as I took, but it was a-'avin' my character took away, and the redicule of that Tommy Wilkins as 'is mother encouraged 'im in, and tho' it's often as she comes in 'ere, she'll never get me there to tea no more, at least, not till the day when she catches me at Lord Mayor's show ag'in, which I would not go to see not if the Lord Mayor 'isself was to ask me.

But what makes it more aggrawatin', is Brown a-wantin' to stand me out as it wasn't the Lord Mayor as I see at all on them occasions, but only a party in a fur cap, as if I didn't know the difference between fur and the 'uman 'ead, tho' I must say as I thinks he'd look all the better if he 'ad it cut ; and it's my opinion that if he was to show 'isself in summer, it would be all the better for all parties concerned ; for let alone losin' my patten, and the other is as good as useless, I spoilt every rag as I 'ad on, and the rheumatics 'as been dreadful, when I'm warm in bed, ever since, which may 'ave been thro' the shock, tho' I can't help

thinkin', it may be thro' standin' so long in the cold and bein' kep' a-waitin' as I was at that Station-house, for which they do ought to 'ave the law took ag'in them, for if ever there was false persecution, there it was, and little use there is in a Lord Mayor as don't keep 'is perlice in better order, and lets them molest them as is right and proper, and a-lettin' others as isn't do their worst, things as I don't 'old with, so I shan't never go to see 'im no more, not if he shows 'isself for a 'undred times.

III.

MRS. BROWN AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S.

"WELL, then," I says, "Brown, you'll go, that's a bargain."

"I'll go," he says, "if I likes my company," says he.

"Well," I says, "Brown, considerin' as the company's your own sister and 'er 'usband, together with your lawful wife, I don't see what you can say ag'in the company."

"When's it to be?" says he.

"Why, this werry day as ever is," says I; "it's Barnes' birthday, and we're to drink tea and go to the waxworx as the underground railway takes you close to."

Brown he was rather 'uffy, and says, "Barnes is a fool for to keep 'is birthday."

"Well," I says, "Brown, that's as people thinks," I says, "different people is different opinions, but," I says, "I wish you'd stick to the point, do you mean to come to Jane's or not, 'cos I'm a-goin' over early?"

He says "He'd see," and that's jest 'is way, you never can get 'im to say out what 'e'll do.

So I says, "Oh! please yourself," and let 'im go 'is own way, only I'd made up my mind as that if he didn't come, no waxworx for me.

I got to Jane's quite in good time, tho' I must say as it was not altogether a pleasant arternoon as I spent, thro' Jane's a-spoilin' the children to that degree as is enough to drive anyone crazy, for there was that Alfred up to every kind of mischief, and 'is mother a-sayin' as boys will be boys.

I says, "So they will, Jane; but there can't be no occasions for their squirtin' water down on parties as is passin' 'armless, and then a-givin' them a lot of cheek when spoke to;" and I'm sure the life as her little gal was a-leadin' that kitten, and as near scalded to death but for me, when 'er mother was engaged with the hinfant, a-goin' to drink out of the spout of the kettle, as was jest on the bile; and 'owever Jane can let that boy 'old the baby I can't think, for it's constant miracles as keeps its 'ead from bein' dashed into splinters.

Barnes, when he come in, set things to rights pretty quick, for he told Alfred as he'd warm 'im if he didn't keep quiet; but, law, you might as well whistle to the ocean waves as speak to that boy; and so it proved, not as I 'olds with Barnes bein' that wiolent as to throw 'is boots, 'eavy nail'd ones,

at the boy, from which he dived down ; and it's mercy as one on 'em only struck me in the shoulder, for if it 'ad been the face it would've been a tooth at the werry least, not to say a eye, as I should 'ave lost thro' it.

Barnes was that enraged as to punch the boy's 'ead, a deal too severe, and obligated to give 'im a ha'penny, and promis' 'im the waxworx for to stop 'is 'owlin's, as was enough to bring the perlice, as did knock at the door and nearly frightened Jane to death ; and the kittle a-bilin' over, with the baby shrieks, and the little gal as was set up at the table a-fallin' back thro' rockin' 'erself back'ards and for'ards, and pullin' the tea-tray with 'er, caused that confusion that I werry nigh went crazy.

You see, that's some people's ways with their children, not as ever I was wiolent with mine, but I must say as our Joe was about the greatest tyrant as ever I see ; and if it 'adn't been for the copper stick applied judicious, I do think that boy would 'ave come to a bad end ; not as our Nancy ever give me much trouble, thro' bein' brought up from 'er teethin' by my own mother, and a-marryin' under eighteen, and I may say almost unbeknown ; and tho' we ain't spoke for months, thro' me a-speakin' of my mind about 'er 'usband, my feelin' is jest the same and ever will be, for I'm sure if ever there was a mother as would do 'er 'eart out for 'er children that's me.

Well, at last when peace and tranquillity was re-

stored, we got our tea, and Brown he come in a-lookin' as I may say noble, and that young as no one would ever think 'im anythink near a grandfather, that they wouldn't, for tho' greyish, he's got a fine forehead, and not many of 'is teeth gone, tho' discolor'd thro' that smokin'

We got on all werry pleasant, tho' Brown and Barnes they must get a-sparrin' over their politics, and bother a deal about this new main sewer as 'ave been made, which Brown says is a noble work, and Barnes 'olds to be a-drainin' away millions; but, law, I'm sure we wants a somethink done for our street after a 'eavy rain. Why, it's pools of water thro' not bein' carried off quick, tho' I must say I attributes a great deal to the way the boys is allowed to go on with their nonsense as stoppin' up the kennels for to collect the water to play in, as I spoke about myself, but all my answers was insults.

After tea we took just a drain, I may say, for to prevent one's feelin' that fluttery as will come on thro' jumpin' up sudden after meals, and we starts off.

Barnes, he carried the little gal, as is only jest three, and Jane with the hinfant, as won't let nobody but 'er mother touch 'er, and as to that boy Alfred, he reg'lar fixed on to me for all the world like a leech, a-pullin' at my dress, and a-askin' of questions, as I'm sure I couldn't answer, and never thought about.

I didn't much care about the walk across Finsbury Square, and by Long Lane through Smithfield, which is now, as the sayin' is, a reg'lar desert, that it is, and looks that neglected as is a disgrace, and parties ruined thro' removin' of the market as there was no occasion for, which Brown says is my rubbish; but I've my feelin's thro' 'avin' expected money from relations here in the public line, as was thought to be rollin' in riches, as when they came to be wound up was found that reduced, as alms-'ouses would 'ave been their portion if they 'adn't found refuge in the grave, and not enough to bury them respectable.

So I didn't say nothin', knowin' as Brown had always rediculed the idea of my 'avin' that money from them, tho' it was mine by rights, leastways, always promised, for often and often as that old gent said to me, when tellin' of the time by 'issilver 'untin' watch, "Ah, Martha, that's yours someday," as likewise that silver teapot, as the led wouldn't never shet close, and the silver teaspoons to match, as I looked on as my own; but disappointment is the lot of man, and what is riches but the idle wind as blows nobody no good, and on which we didn't ought to set our 'earts, that we didn't.

Well, when we got to the railway, I says, "Call this underground; well, all as I can say is, I wish I may never be more underground than this is;"

and Brown says, "and a pretty nuisance you'd be if you wasn't."

"Well," I says, "Brown, I did think as you was more of a man than to insult the memory of your lawful wife in a public railway, but," I says, "it's what I might 'ave expected, thro' the cunnin' man a-tellin' me whenever I was on a journey with a squintin' party, as I should meet with crosses;" and there, opposite me, sat a woman as looked about nine ways at once, with a little boy as took arter 'is ma, as were aperient, for he squinted that wonderful as I'm sure he could have looked over 'is own shoulder easy.

I do believe as them as squints brings you bad luck, for if I didn't drop my ticket down where the winder works, thro' 'avin' it stuck half-way in my glove, and merely a-restin' my 'and on the top of the door, leastways, I suppose I did; but really, thro' bein' so constant in the dark thro' them sewers as the trains runs thro', and the light in the carriage burnin' that dismal as you could only jest see the darkness wisible, as the sayin' is, I'm not sure where or when I lost it, and should not 'ave cared if I could a-kep' it from Brown, he is such a one to go on at you, not as he so much grudged the three-pence, as he said, "I was sich a duffer"—a expression as I do not 'old with applied to a lady, bringin' a larf ag'in 'er from a mere boy as that

Alfred is, who was a-worretin' my life out for to know what steam was.

"Of course," I says, "steam; why steam is what's blowed off bilin' water;" and he wants to know 'ow it makes the railway go, so I says, "It blows it along;" so he says, "How can that be when it goes fust?"

"Well," I says, "Alfred, them is things as we didn't ought to look too close into, or we might be like a gentleman as I've 'eard speak on, who, bein' fond of 'is dinner, as I do not blame 'im for, tho' foolish, in my opinion, to be in that 'urry for it as to want it done by steam, and thro' a-pryin' about the kitchin, which was not 'is place, a-showin' of a friend 'ow things worked, if he didn't go and turn the wrong cock and blowed everythink 'evans 'igh, with 'is own 'ead off, and the cook that scalded as to be took to the 'ospital, with compound fractures, so I don't hold with tamperin' with them things."

There was a serious lookin' party as was a-settin' oppersite, he explained it all wonderful, not as I understood 'is talk, thro' its bein' all dixonary words, as you don't often meet with; but he seemed to know all about it, and to put it that clear, by sayin' if you was to set on the led of the kettle, which I don't see how you could for the handle, jest as it was on the bile, you'd feel the steam would remove you very quick, which, I should say, it would,

for it's a nasty thing to scald as ever I felt, which no one would think of doin', only the gent he put it that way to make it plain to the boy, I suppose, tho' I do 'ope it won't set 'im a-tamperin' with the kettle no 'ow.

I must say as we was not long in bein' whisked to Baker Street, where the train put us out, tho' in that 'urried way, as it's mercy I didn't fall out thro' a-ketchin' my foot in a party's crinoline, as was next the door, as instead of apologizin' was quite rude, and said, "Now then, clumsy," as I told 'er she wasn't no lady, only the engine gave a awful screech as made me quite 'oller out, and on goes the train.

I'm sure Brown made growlin' enough about a-payin' twice over for me, and 'is remarks was werry offensive and 'urt my feelins', so that we didn't say a word till we got to the 'Xhibition, and dear 'eart it were 'evanly.

Talk of glitterin' gold, and lookin' glasses, and lamps, you should see that place, which is one 'eap of 'em ; and really, when I fust went in, I was quite struck solemn it was so grand and still, for all the world like livin' death, for tho' their eyes was all open, they'd got a look with 'em, a sort of a stare, as seemed to go thro' you ; and there was music a-playin' beautiful, and so it did ought to 'ave been, for the peaner was gold, and so was many other things as they played on.

It was ever so long afore I could get at all used to them figgers, and I made one or two mistakes, for I stopped and stared at one gentleman as proved to be livin', tho' a foreigner, with a red cap, as was a-starin' intentionally at somethink, as I found out to be alive, tho' sneezin', and made me scream; and I begged a old gent's pardon for a-knockin' up ag'in 'im, as proved to be nothink but waxworx, tho' he did move 'is 'ead, like the lady on the sofa, with the black wail and the 'eavey busom, as I thinks it's wrong to show, as it might give parties a sudden turn.

Brown he bought a book as esplained who and what they all was, tho' for my part, if they'd belonged to me, I should 'ave wished 'em to 'ave been let rest quiet in their graves, and the more so as I'm sure most on 'em 'adn't done much to be proud on.

Ah! many as was werry grand dressed up there did ought to 'ave been ashamed of theirselves. For there was George the Fifth I think it was, tho' I've a bad 'ead for them things, there he was a-settin' with all 'is wives around 'im, as he'd had put to cruel deaths, as I've 'eard my own mother speak of one on 'em, as was called Queen Caroline, poor thing! as met 'er end thro' bein' shet in the gates of Westminster Abbey, where she did ought to 'ave been crowned, and never 'eld 'er 'ead up afterwards, and was turned out of the Prayer-book, and refused

Christian burial thro' the City of London, and 'ire as bad as bad could be, a-'avin' all them 'ussies round 'im, which, to call them Princesses, is mockery; and what Queen Charlotte never would do, as come to be queen from a 'umble spear, a-standin' at the wash-tub when the King asked 'er to be 'is'n, tho' 'is lawful wife was still alive, as was smothered 'tween two feather beds, thro' a favourite little dog a-bitin' 'er in the lip, as she didn't ought to 'ave been a-nussin', for dogs and cats is werry well in their places, but not for fondlin', in my opinion.

And there was the Gracious Queen and all the Royal family, even to the baby in the cradle, afore she were left with nine, poor thing; and 'ow she could ever 'ave the patience to 'ave set and been taken off in beeswax like that, I can't think, not as I altogether believes in her bein' solid wax, 'cos only think of the bees it must 'ave took to make it.

And there was Gin'rails and Bishops by the score, and the Duke of Wellington and Bonyparty, as I've 'eard my mother speak on often thro' me 'avin' the scarlet fever jest as he was sent out at Elbers, and he was a nice one he was for illtreatin' 'is wives; it's really quite disgraceful 'ow them fellars went on.

And there was the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman, as there was all the row about among the Irish when he fust come over, and well I remembers it; they said he was a-goin' to undermined the Queen's Con-

stitution, but he don't look like it, tho' 'is dress is singular; but as Brown says it's accordin' to 'is conscience, and do ought to be respected, which I quite 'olds with.

And really I should 'ave enjoyed myself werry much but for Alfred, as would keep a-terrifyin' me to death with 'is questions, and a-touchin' every-think.

We see the ancient kings and queens as must 'ave lived before the flood, I should say, because of their dresses bein' that singular, partickler Queen Ann.

And there was Mary Queen of Scots, as were 'ticed away from 'er 'ome, kidnapped I may say, and put to death thro' bein' a Catholic, as the gent in black as was a-talkin' to 'er didn't 'old with; but as I says to Brown, I says, "Forced prayers isn't no dewotions," I says, "so why couldn't they leave 'er alone."

But, law, that's where it is, as I says to Mrs. Bulpit as is serious, when she spoke to me about takin' in the beer of a Sunday, I says, "If you thinks it wrong, Mrs. Bulpit, don't you do it, but leave me to do as I likes."

I was partickler pleased with the Princess Royal in 'er weddin'-dress, as was lovely, and so indeed was a-many more, and 'ow they can keep 'em as they do, I can't think, why, it must take 'ours and

'ours a-dressin' and undressin' 'em every day, and doin' their 'air and all that like dolls.

When we'd see all the kings and queens, and sich like, we was to go and see the Napoleon relics, and the other 'orrors, as was sixpence extra, and well worth it, certingly; but it give me rather a turn, for if there wasn't old Bony 'isself a-layin' in 'is death-bed.

At first, I thought it must be 'is real corpse, it was so life-like, and there was all 'is things about the room, 'is dressing-cases, and tooth-brushes, and all manner, and 'is own carriage as he was took prisoner in, with tables and drawers in it, and well I remember it thro' barkin' my shins ag'in them iron steps a-gettin' in, thro' Alfred bein' that impeterous as he wouldn't give me time to get up.

It was all very grand like, but that confusin' to me as is not used to royal families, so I set down and waited whilst the others was a-lookin' at every-think partickler. Brown and Barnes made it verry unpleasant, thro' their snarlin' over all the things 'cos they did not agree respectin' old Bony, and I was quite glad when we was to pass into another room.

Little did I expect to see what I did see, for well they might call it the rooms of 'orrors, for it was full of them.

There was murderers, and murdered, all as thick

as possible, and I never shall forget what a turn it give me a-seein' a man as did not ought to be showed, in my opinion, a-settin' in a 'ip-bath up to 'is neck in gore, thro' 'avin' been stabbed in that situation by a young gal as did ought to 'ave been ashamed of 'erself, tho' it partly served 'im right for not lockin' the door.

I asked what one lady was doin' up among some nasty-lookin' fellers, and if she didn't turn about to be Mrs. Mannin', as murdered the gentleman as she'd asked to dinner, quite friendly, as was proved thro' 'is steppin' down to the back kitchen, to wash 'is 'ands like a friend; but I was 'appy to 'ear as she was a foreigner, as I never do fancy from the time as the man robbed me so, in sellin' me that Dutch kitchen clock, when we first married, as took a tea-spoon I'm certain, while I was gettin' 'im the 'ammer, and the clock it never went to say right, thro' bein' made in foreign parts, as, of course, isn't up to our time, always wantin' puttin' back, thro' 'im never comin' to see 'ow it went, tho' I've listened for 'im scores and scores of times.

There was one sight as made my blood run cold, that it did; for they never will persuade me he wasn't alive, and settin' there in his dungeon a-waitin' to 'ave 'is 'ead chopped off above stairs, where was the scaffoldin' all ready, on which a king and queen was massacred in cold blood.

I says, when we'd come out, and stopped at the corner of the street for a drop of somethink warm ; for I felt as that cold dungeon had struck to me, I says, " Brown," I says, " in my opinion them as done wrong do ought to be persecuted ; but," I says, " to be kep' there like that, it's not only awful but aggrawatin' "

Brown he busts out a-larfin', and says, " Why you don't mean to say as you thought he was real ?"

" Well," I says, " Brown, he may be real now, or he may not, but he must have been real some-time," I says, " or 'owever could they have copied 'im like that, with the mice a-runnin' over his loaf, which they wouldn't do if it wasn't real ;" and if they didn't all want to stand me out as it was imitation.

" Well," I says, " thank you for the compliment, as if I didn't know the difference between waxworx and reality ; if that was waxworx, why didn't it look like the other royal families as committed just as great 'orrors, for all they 'old their 'eads so 'igh."

As we'd got return tickets, we went back by the underground, leastways, except me, as 'ad lost it, which brought up fresh remarks from Brown, as quite upset me, and what with the stairs, as we 'ad to run down quick to catch the train, and the stiflin'

smell of the place, I thought I should 'ave been choked, and was that speechless as I couldn't utter a word for ever so long.

I was that tired with standin' about, when we got to the station, Jane and me took a cab, thro' it's only bein' sixpence, to the corner of Finsbury, where you turns off for the Curting Road; but the abuse of that cabman, when we cum' to pay 'im, tho' I'd took the little gal on my knee, thro' bein' dead sleepy, you never 'eard; and, in course, there was not a perliceman at 'and, and as to 'is number, I was that confused that I couldn't remember it, tho' it looked to me like many 'undreds of thousands, which, of course, he put on a purpose that people mayn't take it down easy.

I told 'im as I'd 'ave the law on 'im, and if he didn't make faces at me with a vulgar low gesture of puttin' of 'is fingers to 'is nose, and a low-lived crowd a-larfin' and a-jeerin', and a-callin' out, "Yah! go on; I wouldn't be mean if I was you;" and one boy called me old 'orse buster, and there was that riot, that we was glad to 'urry 'ome; for both the children begun for to scream, and if it 'adn't been for a perliceman, we should 'ave been downright mobbed.

When we did get 'ome we 'ad to wait for Brown and Barnes, as 'ad been smokin' with a glass of ale, as Alfred let out; so it was late afore we got a bit

of supper, as I required, and should have much enjoyed, but for Brown and Barnes, as got to their politics, a-wranglin' like mad, and would keep on over the gin-and-water, as seemed to make 'em worse, and then from 'igh words, they got to bein' that friendly, as it was pleasant to see, thro' which it was one o'clock as we passed Shoreditch church, on our ways 'ome, and me a-limpin' like any dog, thro' bein' reg'lar footsore; and when I got to bed, I 'ad awful visions, thro' not bein' able to get them kings and queens out of my 'ead, as is very instructive, and I'm glad I've seen 'em with my own eyes, as the sayin' is, seein' is believin', tho' no one wouldn't know them not to be alive; but it's a thing as is well worth a-seein', and reminds you of what we must all come to, tho', for my part, when I am gone, I'd rather not be stuck up there, and only 'opes as nothin' may never occur as to make me so conspicuous after death.

IV

MRS. BROWN VISITS THE TOWER.

"LAW," I says, "Brown, you never means to say it."

"I do then," says he, "and they'll do it too."

"Never," I says, for really it made my blood run cold; "the idea, and," I says, "with all 'er children, too;" I says, "they'd never do it."

"Yes, they would, I tell you," says Brown, "as they often 'ave before, scores and scores of times."

Well, I see as Brown was a-gettin' excited, as he werry often do, thro' them dratted papers as is always a-aggrawatin' parties thro' a-speakin' of their wrongs, and well we all know them, as 'ave 'ad to suffer, which I told the young man as collects for the water, thro' its not comin' in reg'lar, and the pipes a-flyin' like mad after a 'ard frost, tho' I'm sure I did my werry best by 'oldin' the red-'ot poker near it over and over ag'in, and then to 'ave to pay all the same, tho' I'm sure it cost me money

day arter day out of my own pocket for young Headley to fetch it me from the plug, as was allowed to run that free all over the road, as 'arf the street, I may say, was on its back when it got dark, thro' its bein' that slippy as even list round the shoes could not stand against.

"So," I says, "never mind, Brown;" I says, "it will all come right," I says. "Mark my words, you're always that impeterous as you was when the elder wine wouldn't work, but come out as clear as crystal and strong as brandy, as you yourself allowed," tho' in my opinion it is a bilious thing, especially when taken arter tripe, tho' delicate, and sweet Margate ale, for I don't 'old with none of your bitters, I'd as leef take a dose of physic, that I would, and I'm sure if I 'adn't took a bit of cheese arter it, I never should have got the puckers out of my face thro' taking a deep draught of Allsop's unawares.

So Brown he goes on a-readin', and says, "As no women don't understand politics."

I says, "P'r'aps not; but they may understand that right is right, and wrong is wrong, and," I says, "as to sendin' the Queen to the Tower," I says, "I should like to see the magistracy as would do it, or the perlice as would take 'er in charge, and whatever for?"

"Never you mind," says Brown; "she'll soon

find out what for, if she goes to do it, that's all."

"Goes to do what?" says I.

"Oh! never mind, only you wait."

"Well," I says, "I can wait, and so can she, I dare say, and don't care how long."

Well, I suppose I spoke with a sort of a sneer, for Brown he was reg'lar put up, and says, "Martha," says he, "'owever would you like the streets to be a-rollin' like rivers with a gory revolution, and yourself massacred and your 'ouse and 'ome burnt afore your very eyes?"

"Well," I says, "I shouldn't much care what they did with the 'ouse when they'd done for me; but," I says, "Brown, who's to do it?"

"Well, then," he says, "the Proosians."

"The Proosians," says I, "why I thought we settled them when we took Sebastypole from the French?"

"Rubbish," says he, "that was the Roosians, as the French 'elped us to conquer."

"Well, then," says I, "it's a pity as we wanted 'elp, we must be a-gettin' werry weak when we can't conquer every one, and the French, too, into the bargain, as we did used to do when my dear mother was a gal, as I've 'eard 'er speak on often, for she saw all them foreign kings and queens what we 'ad 'ere prisoners, and I've 'eard 'er speak on

one of 'em in the name of Oldinburg as was that ashamed of 'er situation as to 'ave a bonnet as flapped over in front, almost down to her knees."

So Brown says, "Shut up, will you, a-clackin' on like that; it's the Proosians as wants to check Parliament, and if our Queen goes a-givin' way to them ideas, she'd better 'adn't; but," he says, "you read what 'Wardrobe' says in 'is letter, and then, p'r'aps, you won't bother me."

"No," I says, "thank you, Brown, Wardrobes is all werry well in their ways, but not things as I troubles my 'ead with, and I think as kings and queens do ought to know their own business best, as it's a shame when we thinks of the money as we pays to keep 'em up."

"Ah! that's where it is," says Brown; "not as we grudges them the money as long as they acts right, but if they don't, let them look out for the Tower."

"Well," I says, "Brown, that's what I should like to do myself, thro' never 'avin' seen it, tho' it's often I've wished to, well rememberin' when I was a child bein' took as far as the gateways, where I was that terrified by a old gentleman in a short red petticoat, with a lion in a cage, as nothink would induce me to pass; and I've often been sorry since, tho' p'r'aps it's all for the best, for Lucy May, as went, she 'ad 'er foot werry near tore out of the sockets,

thro' a-bein' a bold gal as would climb up the swing bridge, and was weeks in the 'ospital, and will walk with a limp to 'er dyin' day, tho' married and a family now."

"Well, then," says Brown, "you can go any day for sixpence," he says, "and it's nothink of a walk."

"So," I says, "your sister Jane is a-comin' over to spend the day, and we'll go together," I says, "cos 'er Alfred, he's such a boy for knowin' things."

So thro' a-drinkin' tea with Jane, as is married to a ivory turner in the Curting Road, that next Sunday as ever was, 'er and me agreed about goin', and as Alfred should come too the next Monday week as ever was, it bein' Whitsuntide Monday as he would 'ave a 'oliday.

We 'ad a very pleasant evenin' at Jane's, least-ways it would 'ave been if Brown and 'er 'usband 'adn't 'ad quite 'igh words, thro' Barnes, as is 'er 'usband's name, a-sayin' it was all reg'lar bosh about the Queen a-bein' sent to the Tower, as tho' she'd anythink to do with Proosher; but I do think Brown 'ad all the best on it, 'cos, as he said, "Ain't the Queen often gone to them parts, and ain't Proosher in them parts?" and Barnes he couldn't answer that, he couldn't.

Well, that Monday we met pretty punctual at

the gates of the Tower, tho' Jane was 'alf-an-'our late thro' 'avin' a infant to bring, but that's Jane all over, and we 'ad to pay our sixpence and wait in a place for all the world like the waitin'-room at a railway, and fitted up with refreshments, which we did not require, thro' Jane a-bringin' a few things tied up in a 'andkercher, and me provided in my redicule, for Bath buns is a thing I am not one for, ever since the time as I eat one as 'ad a bad egg in it, tho' I finished it, thro' not ever bein' one to waste, and as to 'ome-made wines they're poor rubbish, and much more likely to do you 'arm than good.

Jane said as we was only allowed to go in a certain number for fear as foreigners might get into the Tower undisguised and seize 'old of it, and then it would be all over with London, tho', for my part, I can't see why they couldn't be all over the place, without ever goin' near the Tower.

Well, at last, our party was called up for to follow a old gent, as were of the Irish perswasion, but very pleasant and free like in his talk, and he spoke French wonderful to some foreigners as was with us, but it's my opinion as foreigners is downright sillies, tho' we do ought to pity them, for it must be a dreadful thing to be a foreigner, and not able to be understood, for they didn't seem to understand a word as he told 'em, tho' it was all

very like a book to 'ear, and, in fact, most of it is wrote down, for Jane bought it for Alfred, as made things very unpleasant, for he would keep a-readin' bits of it, and flatly contradicted the old gent, as was showin' us the things, 'cos he said as the book was different to what the old gent said.

So, I says, "Alfred," I says, "old age is 'onourable," I says, "and of course the gentleman must know, thro' livin' on the spot, as he said, and 'is mother before 'im, and p'r'aps the parties as writes books is only come in a casualty way like as we might do;" but that's the worst of young people now-a-days, I do declare they knows everthink.

I felt a sort of a tremble, I may say, when I passed them gates, as seemed as if they could shut you out of sight every minute, with deep ditches as could drown you easy, if the water was let in, which it would be hinstantly as anyone tried to cross it unbeknown, and there was soldiers as would shoot you dead as soon as look at you, and cannon-balls in 'eaps all over the place, as was ready for firin' off in a hinstant, and then they took us into a place full of men and armour, leastways they was men and horses stuffed, I should say, in armour, and, lor bless you, the weight they must have to bear.

I quite pitied the horses, especially one as 'ad got 'Enry the Eighteenth on 'im, as must have

weighed many tons, but they didn't ought to 'ave put 'im on a 'orse, he was a load for a helephant.

And there was black armour, and gold armour, and tin armour, but I'm thankful its not worn now, for, let alone its weight, it must have been very gallin' to the feelin's, tho' they was brought up to it, for they used to wear it when boys.

Nice dangerous playthings they had in those days, for there was a set of real cannons as one of them kings when a boy had for toys. It wouldn't do for me, for I never would allow our boys even to 'ave squibs.

Some of the things was very old, tho' I don't remember the hages, but he showed some rusty old things as was at least twenty thousand years old.

'Then we was shown all sorts of things for killin' people, and I says to the good gentleman as was a-showin' 'em, "Lor, what a deal of trouble they did take, to be sure, to make things for takin' life when it's such a simple thing." I says, "Ah! it's a strange world."

"Yes," says he, "but the world is good enough, it's the people as is in it."

So I says, "Right you are."

Then we see a lot of arms as 'ad come from Indy, and crooked things as they 'old up their sleeves, and whips 'em into you unawares afore you can say Jack Robinson, as the sayin' is.

Ah, I never could a-bear them blacks myself. The very sight of 'em, in my opinion, is enough to make your flesh creep.

And then they showed us such dungeons, they're downright disgraceful, and don't ought to be allowed. I'm sure there was one 'ole, where they said one gentleman used to sleep, as wasn't fit for a dog, that it wasn't. I think Alfred said it was in his book as it was the party as inwented potatoes and tobacco from Ireland, as they put in there for his pains.

Well, then, there was racks, and thumb-screws, and boot-jacks for torturing them as wouldn't speak the truth, which I says to Jane, in Alfred's 'earin' ought to be a warnin' ag'in them as tells falsities; but, bless you, he was up in a instant, and said as they was tortured for doin' nothink and when they owned to it, was immediate put to death for sayin' so.

Then we see the block and the axe, as put them out of their misery in no time, tho' some on 'em 'as been known to speak thro' it, as must 'ave aggravated their torments very much, I should say.

We see a gate as was bricked up, as Alfred told us was the way as Queen Elizabeth come in when she was confined with Lady Jane Grey, but the old gent a overhearin', said that was wrong, for Queen Elizabeth, tho' unmarried, never 'ad issue; but lor, there's no makin' out what them kings and queens

did in them days, and as to Queen Elizabeth, when I come to see 'er up there on a 'orse, I should say they'd got their work cut out as 'ad to take 'er prisoner; but I don't 'old with a fieldmale bein' that bold, but it's my opinion as she wasn't quite right in 'er mind, for the old gent said as she did used to set on the damp steps by the waterside, and walk on the top of the walls, so p'r'aps it was for that reason as they confined her.

But, bless you, the sight to see is the arms a-'angin' all about the place, and a-standin' up and put in patterns on the ceilin'. There was swords and guns, and pistols and pikes, and 'atchets and haxes, and cannons and all manner.

Alfred, he was all there explainin' out of his book, as made the old gentleman that wild as it was downright upsettin', and then we was took to see the jewels, and was only allowed to look at them thro' iron gratin's, which is very right, for in Alfred's book there was readin' all about a party as stole 'em, thro' knockin' down the old gentleman as showed 'em, which p'r'aps spoilt his temper, and accounts for the lady as shows 'em now bein' so sharp and a 'urryin' on so.

Well, we see the Queen's own crown, as was there, thro' her not a-wearin' it constant when she's on her travels, as wouldn't be safe, for I'm sure somebody 'd soon have it off 'er 'ead.

I'm sure if it was mine I should never sleep a wink with it on my mind, let alone on my 'ead, for they do say it weighs 'undreds of pounds, tho' you wouldn't think so to look at it; and there was other crowns, I suppose second best ones, and 'er spectre as she 'olds in 'er 'and, likewise two globes, as must be tirin' to have to carry constant, and glad she must be to get away from it all. And there was a many other things, a salt-cellar as the royal family is christened in, which seems singular, and Alfred said as I was wrong, but I 'eard the man say so with my own ears, and am not a-goin' to be put down by a chit of a boy, havin' seen punch-bowls used myself in good families over and over again before he was born or thought of, a young monkey.

But dear me, it was 'ard work a-seein' all these things, and I was a-gettin' downright tired, so I sets myself down; but, law bless you, I was up ag'in in a instant, for the old chap was as short as pie-crust, and says, "You mustn't be a-settin' 'ere, old lady."

"Old," says I, "who are you a-callin' old? p'r'aps I may not look as young as them as is my seniors; but I ain't a-goin' to be spoke to like that;" but, law bless you, it wasn't no use a-reasonin' with such. So I got up, and we was all walked across a paved yard, as was painful to the feet, to see the spot as many 'ad suffered death on.

So I says, "Poor creatures, they was out of their miseries, as no doubt they was glad to be, for," I says, "death would be nothin' to what we 'ave seen," for really I was that low I felt quite down I did, and should 'ave liked a good cry, as would 'ave done me good. So I sets down by Jane, as was a-nursin' of 'er infant; but, law bless you, we wasn't allowed that bench in quiet, for a feller 'ollared at us to be off, so loud as caused me to let the bottle fall and smash it, as had only a little sperrits and water mixed, as I brought on Jane's account, thinkin' as she might be faint from carryin' about that 'eavy boy, as wouldn't let me look at 'im, let alone take 'im, bein' just at the awkward age, and fractious thro' 'is teeth a-cuttin' them cross.

Then, arter that, there was a place as they called the bloody tower, thro' their 'avin' murdered infants there, and there was gateways with spikes in a row a-'angin' over'ead as might come down upon you as you was passin' 'armless as we might be, and cut you right thro' if you was unawares; and why they ever do let them remain I can't think; but suppose there is no tellin' what may 'appen, and it's best to be provided for the worst.

There was one room as we saw as was wrote all over the walls by them as 'ad been shet up in it, and there was a old gent confined there within a iron rail; I don't know what he'd done, but there

he was kep', evident, tho' he was allowed to 'ave a few books just to amuse 'im.

Alfred wanted me to ask 'im what he was in for, but as I said I wouldn't for worlds, as it might 'urt 'is feelin's to be reminded on it, and poor fellow when we was come out, I see 'im lookin' out of the winder after us, quite a-longin', no doubt, to get away, as I says to Jane, "Liberty is sweet, but sweeter where there's none."

They showed us where one of them kings cut 'is two wifes' 'eads off with 'is own 'ands.

So I says "More shame for them as stood by and let 'im, a vagabone ;" but it's my opinion as that's the way with them kings, as'll shet you up, and do as they pleases with you, but I'd soon settle 'em if I'd my ways.

I 'aven't no patience with their thumbscrews and butcherin's, and as to their queens, I'm sure I wouldn't 'ave 'ad one of them kings for a 'usband, not was it ever so.

So when we'd been showed all thro' the place, I says to one of the parties as was standin' about, I says, "Where is the wild beasts to be seen?" but he only laughs, and says as there ain't none.

Well, I would not be put off like that, for I know'd better, so I goes up to one of them parties as I'd seed years ago with a red sort of a petticoat, and a black velvet cap stuck round with bits of

ribbon, as looked in my opinions very ridiculous, and I says to 'im, "Which way do we turn to the lions?" I says.

He says, "Law bless you, my good woman, they've been done away with this many a long day."

I says, "You'll excuse me, sir, but I knows different," I says, "for I've seen 'em with my own eyes."

"That was when my grandmother was a gal," says the man.

"Beggin' your pardon," I says, "it was when I was a gal."

"Then," says he, "you're old enough to be my grandmother;" and Alfred he burst out laughin' like mad.

"So," I says, "p'r'aps I am, and p'r'aps I ain't; but if I was your grandmother, I'd a taught you better manners," I says, "you ridiculous old Jack-in-the-green."

Well, that put 'im out, so he says, "Don't be a-makin' no row 'ere, it ain't allowed; walk your chawks, or I'll make you."

"Make me," says I, "make me; you lay a finger on me, you dressed up old guy, and I'll pretty soon show you."

Afore as I'd time to think or wink, I may say, he took 'old of me by one arm, and another fellow

took the other, and if they didn't both run me faster than my legs could carry me across the bridge, as seemed to tremble with our weight, right down to the gates, and shoved me out.

I was that mad as I didn't 'ardly know what I was doin', and was a-goin' to 'it at one on 'em with my umbrella, when my foot slipped, and down I came, and the ground bein' all of a slant I rolled over and over, and if it 'adn't been for the waterman at the cab-stand as stopped me, I might 'ave been in the road and run over in a instant.

I was in a nice mess ; there was my black velvet bonnet as is trimmed with cherry-coloured ribbons with a edge, it was crushed flat on to my face ; my swan's down tippet as was my dear mother's, was ruined also ; a small blue shawl as I always wears under it ; and as to my dress, which is a blue musling-de-laine and orange flowers on it, you should see the figger as it is, as cleanin' won't touch and turnin' useless.

Well, Jane she come up to 'elp me ; but, bless you, her infant set up them shrieks as was dreadful, and wouldn't let 'er come near me, and Alfred he made matters worse, thro' wipin' me down unbeknown with a dirty wisp of 'ay, and I do think if the waterman 'adn't dashed some cold water in my face, which was well meant tho' dangerous thro' me bein' that warm, I do believe I should 'ave

gone off into one of my dead faints as I've 'eard my dear mother say was frequent took for trances when a gal.

So when I was a little come to myself, I went into a 'ouse as the waterman led me to, where I did take a little somethink warm with, and persuaded Jane to, for she was as white as a sheet thro' alarm, and they was all werry kind to me, and the good lady as kep' the 'ouse told me I was lucky as it was no worse, for she says "There's no lookin' at 'em in that Tower, in fact, mum, it's a mercy as you're 'ere safe and sound."

I says, "Such places do not ought to be allowed, but," I says, "I've got a 'usband at 'ome as will show 'em," not as Brown is one as would.

Jane, she backs me up, and says, "Ah, that he will;" but we was advised by the waterman for to go 'ome quiet, 'cos he says he should be sorry to see what he might see, me bein' a lone woman, as the sayin' is, thro' Jane bein' 'ampered with the infant, and Alfred a mere boy.

So when I was more myself, tho' my elber was that painful thro' me a-pitchin' on to it, that I didn't think as I could have walked at first, we got 'ome gradual, I may say; but it was ever so much later than I expected, and as we 'ad took a

somethink to eat with us, we agreed to wait for a cup of tea till Brown come in, and never was I more aggravated with Brown, as I was over that cup of tea, for when I was a-tellin' 'im 'ow shameful I'd been treated, if he didn't say as it must 'ave been my fault, and if Jane didn't go right round thro' a-mentionin' me askin' for to see the wild beasts, which 'ad nothink to do with my age, as them fellows was so insultin' about.

So I says to Alfred, I says, "Did I say anythink to 'urt their feelin's?" and when he said about me callin' the party a old Jack-in-the-green, Brown says, "You may thank your stars as you're 'ome safe; why, them's noblemen as waits on the Queen 'erself, and called beef-eaters because the custom was for them to taste all the wittles afore the king and queen put a bit in their mouths thro' fear of poison."

"Well," I says, "they may be all that, but I'm as certain as I'm a livin' woman, that the one as I spoke to 'ad been a-drinkin' "

Brown says, "What of that," and as he lived under-coachman with the Lord Mayor's widow, why of course he knows the 'abits of them swells; but all I've got to say is, that lords is werry well in their way, and so is towers, but let me keep out of them, for I don't 'old with such places, and them black

'oles and murders, as it's my opinion from the way as they treated me there, they'd do any mortal thing as can disgrace the mind of man, which I 'olds strikin' of a fieldmale to be unworthy of any one as calls theirselves a gentleman.

V.

MRS. BROWN VISITS CREMORNE.

"WELL, to be sure," I says, "I never did; what will they do next?"

"What are you a-growlin' at?" says Brown.

"Mr. Brown," says I, "bears and lions growls, and I am not a bear, neither am I a lion. I was merely a-makin' of a remark, which is my privilege, I suppose, when I meets with things as takes me a-back, and certingly this does."

"What's that?" says Brown.

"Why, whatever do you think," says I, "if the Royal Princesses and the rest of the Royal Family ain't a-goin' to run a race at Cremorne Gardens."

"Who told you that rubbish?" says Brown.

I says, "Rubbish it may be, but 'ere it is in print, and they don't never print falsehoods."

"Don't they," says Brown.

"Well," says I, "they wouldn't be likely to take the trouble to print 'em, for tho' tellin' 'em is

what I don't 'old with, yet it ain't the same trouble as printin' 'em."

"Where's the printin'?" says Brown.

"Here," says I; for I was a-doin' what I may say I'm 'ardly ever give to, and that is readin', for they do put such a deal of rubbish in the papers now-a-days as there's no use a-payin' attention to, and, besides, they prints 'em that ridiculous size as they're ain't no readin' not even them as 'as eyes, which I'm thankful as I can see our milkman, and know 'im from one end of the street to the other, so it can't be that my sight is failin', tho' Brown 'as took to glasses, and there's only six months between us in reality, tho' he always will 'ave as he's four years younger than me, cos he says he was born on the 31st of February, as only 'appens once in four years, as the sayin' is.

So when Brown 'ad looked at the paper, he says, "There you are again at your mistakes. Why it's balloons in honour of the Royal Family."

"Well," I says, "whatever the Queen's magistracy can be thinkin' of for to let her Royal Family go up in a balloon is more than I can make out; but," I says, "we lives in strange times," for I see one once as went over this 'ouse, and I wouldn't 'ave 'ad a dog as belonged to me in it, for it fell over by the Plumstead Marshes, and was dragged along ever so far, and blew up at last thro' a coun-

tryman and a lantern. I remember it quite well, tho' it was when we fust come to this 'ouse, for never shall I forget it thro' bein' a-ironin' at the time, with a 'orse full of things a-airin', and runnin' out into the back yard to look at it, with the door left open the draught attracted the things to the fire, and I was only back just in time to save the 'ouse, with the ironin' blanket burnt thro' and thro' because of me in my 'urry a-puttin' the iron, 'ot as it was, down without the stand, as I ought to have done.

So if any one ought to know what balloons is I ought to, with their dangers, to say nothink of fallin' out, which I am sure I should, thro' the 'ead a-growin' that dizzy from bein' that dazzlin' height.

So Brown says, "What a woman you are to clack to be sure ; why you never half reads nothink, and then don't understand what is told you."

So I says, "Brown, it's well for you to jeer and deride at others as doesn't waste their time over readin' ; but wherever would your socks and flannin' waistcoats be, if all my evenin's was passed over newspapers and such like rubbish, as I ain't no patience with like young Mrs. Ivins next door, as is always up to 'er eyes in the 'Family Herald,' as," I says to 'er, "Mrs. Ivins, you'll excuse me a-speakin' to you as a young wife, but," I says,

"readin' and writin' is very well in their ways, but," I says, "give me the woman as would scorn to let 'er 'usband go out with 'is shirt in rags," for so it was, I never see such a-thing, and she that short in 'er answers, as we 'ave not spoke since, tho' livin' next door, with only palin's between, and come often in contract with 'angin' out simultaneous, as the sayin' is, which led to the remarks on the linen.

But Brown he goes on with his pipe, and makes no further remarks till after supper, when he says, all of a sudden, "What do you say, Martha, to goin' to Cremorne to see the Royal balloons?"

"Well," I says, "Brown, I've heard werry singular things about them places as is frequented by tip-top people, tho' I must say the state as young Robison opposite come 'ome in one mornin' from Cremorne, and woke up the whole street with his screeches, was not such as I 'olds with.

"Well," says Brown, "it's a place as I particular wants to see, and indeed 'ave been asked to go to the Licensed Wittler's feet, as is 'eld there Tuesday week."

"Whatever is their feet?" I says.

"Why, a good jollification," says he.

"And a very pleasant thing, too," says I.

"But," adds Brown, "thro' me not bein' able

to get away just now early enough for the dinner, we might go later on."

"Well," I says, "Brown, if the Licensed Wittler's is a-goin' it's all very well, then it must be proper, 'cos thro' my own father havin' been in that line, tho' never reg'lar established, I've always had a respect for that way."

"Why, I thought you said as your father was a waiter," says Brown.

"And so he was," says I, "and I've 'eard my dear mother say he's waited on dukes often and often, and when he'd got a clean shirt on and a frill with 'is black suit, he looked a deal more fit to be waited on than many as 'eld their 'eads precious 'igh. But," I says, "Brown, Cremorne must be many a mile from this," I says.

"No," says he, "it's a mere nothink, for the steamer takes you from London Bridge to the gardens."

"Well," I says, "Brown, I'm agreeable, relying," I says, "as you wouldn't take me to no place as wasn't what it did ought to be."

"Well," he says, "I don't think as much 'arm can 'appen to you; you're safe anywheres."

I says, "Brown, don't you be too sure," I says, "for don't you remember what 'appened to Mrs. Wilsin, as is own sister to Mrs. Parker at the Catherine Wheel as was run away with thro' settin'

on the step of the omblebus, as they went a-gipsyin' into Eppin' Forest, when the 'orses took fright all of a sudden thro' the volunteer's band, and she only restin' for a-minute, as was never the same woman ag'in, and would start like lunatics if it was only thro' the bangin' of a door, 'er nerves bein' reduced to fiddle-strings, as the sayin' is."

Brown only says, " Bother Mrs. Wilsin ; what's that got to do with it ; will you go, or will you not ? "

" Well then," I says, " Brown, don't take one up so sudden, there's plenty of time, and I'll think about it ; " and so I did, and more than that I spoke about it to Mrs. Parker, as said it was 'er intentions to go, not as she should be at the dinner, but would join them later on, as bein' in weeds she might be thought bold, tho' 'er husband's two brothers would be there with their families, and all quite genteel and proper. " For," she says, " it's a sight as I likes to see, and not only me but others. Ah ! scores of parties of quality has been known to 'ave come on them occasions, for in course the nobility takes a deep interest in the Licensed Wittlers, for it's all very well for them to 'old themselves so 'igh, but where would they be without their beer."

" So," I says, " you may well say that, for 'uman thirst is a thing as there's no puttin' off."

She says, " Right you are, Mrs. Brown, for

when I lived with my aunt, afore I married Parker, as kep' a first class house at the West End, I've seen many and many a lord enjoy his pint of beer for all the world like a workin' man, and more too, that I 'ave."

Well, so it was agreed as Mrs. Parker should go along with us, and tho' it was a sad sight to see 'er in them weeds, poor thing, and black is such a thing for 'eat, that I thought she'd be sweltered to death with all that crape over 'er face; but she says, "No," she says, "Mrs. Brown, I am not the one to forget, I am not, tho'," she says, "there is things as I'd rather not remember, a-respectin' of 'im as is gone." Which well I know'd to be true, for if ever there was a brute it was Parker, wiolent in liquor, and dead sulky when sober, which, luckily, he never was rightly in my opinion; and when he 'ad the delirious trimblings, as induced 'im to try to throw 'is self out of the second floor winder, and would a done it but for the brewer's board, as was providential placed, and the potman interfering; and I'm sure if ever there was a deliverance it was 'im.

Ah! but it's woman's heart as clings, as I said to Brown, and he only replies, "Rubbish, she'll be married within a year," which, tho' it proved true, I do not believe as was premeditated, tho' I must say the way as Mrs. Parker did go on with 'im as

turned out to be her second that evenin', at Cre-morne, tho' I little thought it then, was rather bold, and caused unpleasant remarks, and words, I may say, with 'er and 'er sister-in-law.

When Tuesday week came it was a reg'lar smokin'-'ot day, so I dressed myself light, and was all ready for Brown, and a cup of tea, by a very little after four ; but some'ow or other things didn't go very smooth, for Mrs. Parker kep' us a-waitin', a thing as Brown can't a-bear. So he would walk on, and leave me to foller with Mrs. Parker in the omblebus, as set us down wrong, and we had ever such a trouble to get to the steamboats, where we never found Brown at all, thro' 'is a-gettin' as sulky as a bear with a sore head, and as it turned out, never went at all.

Well, when I come to look round and couldn't see him nowheres, I was for turnin' back, but Mrs. Parker says, "Of course he 'ave gone on, and will meet us in the Gardens," so under them ideas, I consented to take the voyage.

We got aboard with difficulty, and I was as near swep' into the river, thro' catchin' my foot in a rope as we was a-steppin' on to the steamer, as ever anythink was in this world. It was crowded, to be sure, not a seat to be 'ad, and the shovin' was such by some young men, that I was terrified to death for fear of bein' forced down among the engines,

and ground to bits for all the world like the poor man as was made sausage-meat on in 'is own mill; and as to them poor creatures as works the engines, talk of slaves, why they can't be nothin' to it, and do ought to be made do it, in my opinion, 'cos of course bein' black, thro' nature, it wouldn't be the same 'ardships to them as it is to Christshuns.

Certainly it is wonderful to see 'ow they works the boat, to make it do just what they wants; tho', I must say, I thinks it's highly dangerous the way as parties leaps aboard at places, not as I'm one as cares about the water at all, and I'm sure if anyone did fall in they must be poisoned thro' its bein' beastly dirty, and most offensive in its smells. I couldn't think whatever it was at first, and suspected wrongful a party with shrimps and pennywinkles, as was not as fresh as they might 'ave been; but when they said it was the river as smelt like that, I says, "It's shameful then to make us pay for such stuff, which makes the thoughts of cookin' go ag'in you, and as to tea you couldn't use it for."

But the steamers has got werry nasty bump-tious ways with 'em, for we come with that violence ag'in landin'-places, as took me clean off my feet more than once, and the figger as I was thro' their lettin' down the chimney in passin' thro' bridges, as poured the blacks out in oceans all over me, tho' it was useless to speak about it, 'cos it must be

done, and the crowdin' was such as I couldn't move out of the way of it, but it come a-roarin' in my face every time.

I didn't see much as we went along, thro' me bein' short and parties all standin' round me; but at, I think they called it Hungerford, many parties stopped, but plenty more joined us, as they did in other places, till we was past Westminster, where we see the Parliament House, as is a large buildin', and Lambeth Palace, as looked to me like a parish church, and a prison as they calls the Plenitentiary, with Westminster Abbey behind it, as I was glad to see, thro' 'avin' 'eard speak of it, tho' unseen before.

By this time there was lots of room, and we was settin' quite comfortable, and the river 'ad got sweeter, and we got safe to land, as is only a short walk from the Gardens, to which the way in is werry grand, with lamps just a-bein' lighted, but only for show, as it was broad daylight, and I was so pleased, for we was in time for the balloons, which I'd kept worretin' over, a-thinkin' as we should be too late for.

I looked round everywhere for Brown, but couldn't see a vestment of 'im nowheres, which made me rather uneasy; but Mrs. Parker she met a friend at the werry gate, a werry nice gentleman as said no doubt but Brown would turn up. So we

went up to see the balloons more close thro' Mrs. Parker's friend bein' some way bekknown to 'em, and 'as made ascensions hisself.

Well, there they was, 'ideous great bags blowed up with baskets, and ropes a-'oldin' of 'em down, and they kep' a-swingin' to and fro, and there was parties as was a-goin' up with anchors, and sand-bags, and all manner; and there was a lady as meant to 'ave gone, but 'er 'art failed 'er at the last. Mrs. Parker's friend says she were a nobility, tho' a expression as she let drop did not sound like it, but it might 'ave been thro' fear, for you never can tell what you may be brought to say or do when your presence of mind gives way as mine did, when I see the ropes cut, and them balloons bound up into air all of a sudden, and float away like birds over the trees, with the band a-playin' and people a-cheerin', and the parties a-wavin' flags from the balloons, a-makin' believe as they liked it, which must be werry unlikely and not my own feelin's, for this world's good enough for me, and it do seem to me presumptuous to be a-goin' up into eternity like that, but Mrs. Parker's friend he says, "We shall soon be a-travellin' everywhere with them."

"Well, then," I says, "it will be worse than railways," I says, "for think of the bumpin' ag'in one another by means of the wind bein' without

control up there, let alone people a-fallin' out or lettin' things drop accidental on your 'ead."

We walks about a bit, and then sets in a very pretty little 'arbour, and had bottled ale and seedy biscuits, as was refreshin', and then there was a party as was dressed in nothink but remarkable short black velvet smalls, as went up a rope with a pole in 'is 'ands; but I shet my eyes, for I can't a-bear to see parties a-rescuin' of their lives, and all for nothin', in that way.

After that they said as there was a ballet, but, bless you, there was no gettin' near the place, and I got that jammed ag'in the door-post in just tryin' to look in, as nearly squeezed the breath out of my body; so we walked round and looked at some paintin's as was very lovely certainly, and there was a great crowd, and parties as had been a-dinin' was full of their jokes, tho', in my opinion, apt for to make a little too free.

Then we walked up and down, or round and round, where the band played up in a sort of a place as looked like a Chinese temple on the willow pattern plates, as I've got some at 'ome, but certainly it is all very beautiful 'ung round with glass drops as sparkled lovely, as they lighted 'em up thro' it's a-growin' darker, and parties begun to dance, but I didn't see much in it, for they was merely children and young fieldmales a-jumpin' about.

Mrs. Parker she met with a-many friends, and was soon a-walkin' all over the place with that young man by the name of 'Arris, as did use to pay attentions to Miss Gardner, as was daughter to Mrs. Parker's own sister-in-law's brother.

So that brought on words thro' Mrs. Watkins as were her aunt, a-makin' the remark as Mrs. Parker were old enough to be 'is mother, which is not the truth, for tho' she will never see forty-five ag'in in my opinion, yet with 'er 'air in ringlets, and a black satin plat as she did used to wear before 'er weeds, she looks five year younger, and the young man is past thirty, if he's a 'our.

We see a lot of monkeys and dogs, as we was led to thro' a-followin' the band, as I believe you must do accordin' to the rules; they was very natural, and did it wonderful, and as we come back Mr. 'Arris he shot with rifles at Cheyney ornaments and got one, which he gave me; but I soon see as two was company and three is none, as the sayin' is, for Mrs. Parker and that young man was a-carryin' on too much like sweethearts for me; so I drops behind a-wishin' as I could see Brown anywheres; and as I was a-walkin' along, a young man wanted me for to try my strength, which I told 'im I 'ad done already, for my legs was a-failin' me fast. So as I was easily persuaded to set down in a chair, as only proved to be a weighin' machine, and I was

put out, for if the fellow as was managin' it didn't 'oller out 'ow many stone I was, and parties as was a-standin' round whilst I was weighin', burst out a-laughin', and one impudent young fellow said, "Ain't she a stunner!"

If Brown had been there he'd a-knocked 'im down, and I felt it was not the place for a lady without a protector, and some'ow I'd lost sight of Mrs. Parker, and just then I was very much frightened, in consequence of two gentlemen a-comin' to blows about the one a-lookin' at the other's young lady, but it all blowed over and come to nothink; but I felt that nasty sinkin', as I was obliged to take a glass of warm brandy-and-water, for the night had turned that chilly that I was quite sorry I hadn't brought a thick shawl; and, to tell the truth, I was rather peckish, thro' having took a-nothink to speak of with my tea, and only 'arf a seedy biscuit since; and just then, as luck would have it, I run ag'in Mrs. Parker and Mr. 'Arris, as was just a-goin' to 'ave some supper. "But," I says, "depend on it they'll run you up to pounds directly;" so it was agreed as we should 'ave some bread and cheese, which wasn't first-rate, for the bread was stale, and the cheese that strong, as it seemed to give you a stinger on the roof of your mouth.

The beer was certainly very good, tho' the

waiters wouldn't 'ardly attend to us ; and we was that time over our bread and cheese, as I said it must be a-gettin' late, and I was that fidgetty at not seein' Brown nowheres about, but Mrs. Parker says we must stop to see the dancin', as I was very much 'urt to think as Mrs. Parker should a-joined in, for let alone bein' lusty, I do not think as dancin' and widder's weeds goes well together, and so I told 'er, as seemed to make 'er grow cool, so I turns away, and was not altogether pleased, for there was a many parties as couldn't keep their legs, and it was gettin' riotous, when all of a sudden up goes a rocket, as made me start, and every one rushes away to see the fireworks, and, bless you, they carried me along just as tho' I had been no-think, and I was that scarified at bein' took away from my friends, that I couldn't 'arf enjoy the fireworks, tho' they was very lovely, but lookin' up don't suit me ; besides somethink fell out of one of them rockets very near me as made me give such a scream, and away I runs.

I wandered about a-lookin' for Brown, when the fireworks was over ; but, dear me, some of the walks about was that dismal as I didn't like to go down them all lonely, tho' most of the place was lighted up beautiful.

So I goes back to where they was a-dancin', and I see a great deal of difference in the company.

Oh! there was elegant parties, such as you'd look round for the carriage and downright noblemen, and all so free and pleasant like; but there was too much on it for me, and I was quite bewildered, when I 'eard a voice exclaim, "Why, I'm blest, if she ain't there;" which was Mr. 'Arris, as looked pale and spoke a little thick, and he says, "Mrs. Brown, mum, wherever have you been?"

I says, "Been, why, been lost; that's what I've been."

"Then," he says, "we've been a-lookin' for you everywhere;" and he says, "what will you take before we start?"

"Well," I says, "if it's anythink, I'll have a little somethink 'ot as it can be, for I'm all of a creep; but," I says, "where's Mrs. Parker?"

"Oh! all right," he says, "over 'ere."

So we goes and sits down by 'er, and certainly she looked very strange, and a sort of a deadly pale, but I thought it was the black.

Well, they'd brought me a little drop of 'ot. So I says, "Won't you take a sip?" to Mrs. Parker.

Well, she ketched 'old and pretty well dipped 'er beak into it, I can tell yer, and then she began a-tellin' me 'ow her sister-in-law 'ad been a-talkin' to 'er, and a-tryin' to set 'er 'Enry, by which she meant 'Arris, agin 'er, and she got that

excited over the subject as she clutched me till I writhed in agonies, thro' my flesh bein' that tender to pinches.

Well, then, if she didn't begin for to cry like mad, and said as she wouldn't bear it, and then she took to screamin' and hysterics.

Law, sich a scene as you never did, and the jeers and the redicule, and ladies as ought to have know'd better, a-sayin' as she was in liquor, and when we got to the ladies' room, it was ever so long before she come to 'erself, and when she was better if it wasn't daylight, and we 'ad to turn out and get 'er along the best way we could, for Mr. 'Arris was anythink but steady on 'is legs, which he attributed to the night air, thro' not being accustomed to it; and no signs of Brown nowhere, and such a low crowd around us, and I never did feel such miserable feelin's, but at last we was obliged for to get a cab, as wouldn't take us 'ome under seven shillin's, and never was I so ashamed as when Brown let me in, and says, "You're the right sort for Cremorne, you are." Though I was enraged, I says, "Brown, you might never 'ave set eyes on me ag'in;" and he says, "No sich luck." And the language as he applied to Mrs. Parker nearly broke my 'art, tho' I must say, as I do not 'old with 'er behaviour, tho' after all, poor thing, any of us may be overtook in a fault; but the worst of it

is, as she's total forgotten all as 'appened, and I don't like to ask 'er for the cab money, for fear of 'urtin' 'er feelin's, poor thing, thro' the explanations as must occur; but I'll take good care never to go nowhere ag'in without Brown, for, depend upon it, as parties as is married didn't ought to go out without their lawful 'usbands as was meant by nature to be our protectors; and tho' Mrs. Parker is a party as I 'ave a respect for, she will never get me for to accompany 'er in that state of life in which she did not ought to have been, tho' I do not think as it will ever be a match with 'er and that young man, that I do not, and a lucky escape for 'er, but there's no tellin'.

VI.

MRS. BROWN AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

I WAS a-settin' up for Brown, a thing as I 'ates, and don't 'old with a man a-keepin' out that late, not as Brown is one to keep out in the gen'ral way, I must own, for if he 'ad been I should 'ave been in my grave long since, thro' worretin' like my own sister, as was married to a baker, and never know'd what it was to 'ave a quiet life thro' the 'ours as he kep', inticin' 'im to drink, and then inflammation a-settin' in, were left a widder with five.

I was all of a creep thro' shudders, for the fire'd gone out, and tho' well wrapped up, yet it is always chilly arter twelve, tho' I felt as I couldn't say much to Brown thro' me bein' that once so late 'ome from Cremorne, and never got a farthin' from Mrs. Parker, as is now Mrs. 'Arris, for the cab, tho' it's nearly twelve months ago, and they do say as he 'ave begun to make too free behind the bar already; but that's where it is a-'avin' of it always ready to

your 'and, and a drop here and a drop there, why it mounts up, as I'm sure Mrs. 'Arris's own face will tell, tho' a sober woman in the gen'ral way.

I was beginnin' to think of garrotters, and all like that, when just as it were on the stroke of one, I 'eard a-singin' in our street, and was a-sayin' this never can't be Brown, when there come a rap at the door, as gave me such a turn, as I remained for minutes unmoveable like, and was just a-rushin' to open the door when I remembers as Brown might not be alone, thro' my 'earin' of voices outside, and bein' not in that dress as I should care to see visitors.

So I speaks thro' the door before openin', and it was Brown, who says, "All right, open the door, it's only friends."

I says, "Brown," I says, "friends or foes, 'evans forbid as anyone but my own lawful husband should see me as I am," for I'd got myself ready for bed, with a cloak over my shoulders and a shawl round my head.

So, upon that, I hears a good deal of good-nightin', with a many blessin's on all sides a-passin', and then bein' sure as the other parties was gone, I opens the door and lets in Brown, not in liquor, no, he was not, but smilin' as the sayin' is, and he begun with 'is nonsense, a-goin' on about me not openin' the door.

I says, "Brown, it is not my 'abits to see gentlemen in my dishybil," and then, tho' cheerful, he was rude, and says, "What does it matter 'ow any-one sees an old woman like you."

I says, "Brown," I says, "take them jests to where they're relished—to your clubs and places; but," I says, "respect your 'ome, and 'er as keeps it up."

He says, "All right, old gal; I'm sorry I've kep' you up."

I says, "Brown, I am not one as would ever wish to prevent my 'usband from enjoyin' 'isself, tho'," I says, "reason in all things; but whatever 'ave kep' you so late?"

"Well," he says, "Martha, I'm a oddfellow," he says.

I says, "Brown, that's nothin' new; you always was."

He says, "No," he says, "I've been made one to-night."

I says, "Whatever do you mean?"

He says, "Never you mind, it will be all the better for you when I'm dead and gone," he says, and 'is voice trembled as he went on a-sayin' as I'd been a good wife to 'im, and a lot more.

I says, "Brown, if it's a-berryin' club," I says, a-wipin' of my eyes, for Brown's ways 'ad made me feel very low, "I don't 'old with it, for," I says,

"I never could a-bear to take money as I made by your death," I says, "for it would always seem like the price of your body."

He says, "That's rubbish," he says, and I see it was no use a-arguin' the pint, tho' I know'd what 'appened to Mrs. Giddins oppersite as lost 'er 'usband, a copper-plate engraver, thro' 'avin' belonged to one of them clubs, as it preyed on 'is mind, and 'astened 'is end, poor fellow.

But I see as Brown would be better in bed, so said nothink, and when he was gone off, I folded up 'is things as he'd throwed down all over the place, contrary to 'is usual 'abits as is tidy, and was just arrangin' 'is pantaloons, when out of the pocket falls a lot of things, and among them some tickets, as I didn't look at, for I'd scorn to do it behind his back, so I puts 'em with the other things on the drawers, and was glad to get to bed.

In the mornin' Brown says to me, "What," he says, "you've found 'em out?"

"What?" says I.

"Why the Crystial Palis tickets."

"I'm sure," I says, "I never looked at what they was."

"Well then," he says, "there for Thursday; it's our annual day, and we're a-goin' "

"Wherever to?" I says.

"Why, there," says he.

"Where's there?" says I.

"Why the Crystial Palis, to be sure," says he, "where kings, and emperors, and everybody else goes."

"Well," I says, "I've heard speak of it often and often; but, bless you, if I was to let my 'ead run full of pleasure and palises, as the song says, a nice home you'd have."

"Well," he says, "you'll go a Thursday, won't you?"

I says, "I must think, Brown. Monday I shall have my bit of a wash on my 'ands, and I was thinkin' I'd 'ave the sweeps Thursday, for I'm sure that chimbly 'ave nearly poisoned me, for I don't believe as that there thing like a fishin' rod with a bottle brush at the end, ever acts thoroughly, tho' I do say as the boys was cruelty ever since that time as I read about the one as stuck and was left there, and never found thro' the 'ouse a-bein' to let, till 'is skeleton come down the chimbly, when the new tenants first lighted a fire."

So Brown says, "Bother swceps, 'ave them Friday."

"Well," I says, "I might do a good deal, Brown, but not 'ave sweeps of a Friday, for the cunnin' man he told me never to cross my blacks, and Friday is a black day."

"Well, then," says Brown, "if you're such

a fool as to mind that 'umbug, 'ave 'em on Saturday."

I says, "Brown, don't you speak ag'in them things as is solemn and proved true, as you well know, for wherever would our Joe 'ave been with that wen on his neck if it hadn't been for my gettin' 'im touched by that cunnin' man with the drowned man's finger as 'ad passed thro' fire and 'angin'."

So Brown he only says, "Stuff," which is always his ways when he's got the wrong end of the stick; and he goes on a-worretin' about the Crystial Palis till I give my consent, tho' reluctant, for I don't half fancy them odd fellows.

The weather bein' that fine, I was a-speakin' to Mrs. Pollin' about my dress, and she says, "Mrs. Brown, mum, if I was you, I'd dress light, for tho' you are a full figger there's no occasions for you to look over stout;" and she says, "I've got a musling by me as I took in exchange from a young lady as I works for, as it belonged to her missus, bein' carriage people, and therefore strikin' in pattern thro' bein' that fashionable."

I says, "Mrs. Pollin', it's well dressed as I should wish to be, tho'," I says, "carriage dresses is not my ways."

So she brings it over for me to see, and it must have been a beauty, tho' much tumbled when new;

so Mrs. Pollin', she says, "I'll alter it, and do it up like new for you, and I don't think as you'll consider five-and-sixpence dear, and you can wear it with your green barege shawl, as is covered with them birds worked in red and blue."

I says, "Spendin' of money on dress is not what I 'olds with, but," I says, "I thinks as I shall wear my blue musling-de-laine;" but, bless you, I couldn't, for the sea-water a-goin' to Brighton 'ad made it a ashy grey, in spots all over.

Says Mrs. Pollin', "Rather than see a lady as I respects as a neighbour and likes as a friend, go out in that, I'd make her a present of the musling, alterations and all."

"No," I says, "Mrs. Pollin', reward sweetens labour, and if it will suit you to take three-and-sixpence for it it's a bargain."

She says, "You shall have it, tho' I've refused five shillin's to Mrs. Wickets, at the coal-shed, as is goin' to her niece's weddin' "

I must say when Mrs. Pollin' 'ad fitted it to me after a-dampin' of it down and a cool iron, it did look very nice, and the colour as was a bright yellar seemed to revive wonderful; it was made quite in the fashion, the skirt bein' cut in gores, and flounces up to the waist, and its only fault bein' a little tight in the arm-'oles, as rather confined my arms.

Mrs. Pollin' she'd got a straw-er white bonnet, as she said would go wonderful well with it, and so it did, with deep blue ribbons and daisies round the face.

The weather was that fine that I didn't need a umbreller, and as to a parysol, as the Palis bein' all in-doors, it didn't seem necessary.

I was determined to be punctual, for Brown as I was to meet at the London Bridge Station, and got there full a 'our before the time, and was much put about by the crowds as kep' a-comin' up, and at last I was glad to get 'old of Brown, as took the tickets, and we started.

When we was in the train, where Brown met some of 'is friends and their good ladies as was a-goin', one on 'em said to 'im, "Why don't you wear your insignier?"

"My what?" says Brown.

"Your insignier," says the gent, a-pointin' to a ribbon cockade and a medal as 'e'd got to 'is coat, which I thought meant as he'd been a soldier, for there was a many more as 'ad 'em.

So upon that, Brown pulls out of 'is pocket 'is'n, as he stuck on to 'isself with large pins, and certingly he did look all the gentleman.

"So," I says, "Brown, you looks for all the world like some of them parties at the wax work, and quite as nice."

"Well," he says, "if you admires my dress, it's more than I do yours. Wherever did you get that tomfool of a gown from, and your bonnet's a deal too small for you," which was certingly true, for when I tried it on at first I 'adn't made no allowance for my 'air, and the bonnet wouldn't come nicely over the ridge as was formed by my 'air on the top of my 'ead.

I was natural 'urt at Brown's remarks, and a lady says, "Never you mind, mum, 'e'd have sung a different song forty years ago."

So I says, "Mum," I says, "he would not 'ave 'ad me to sing to forty years ago, for I were a mere child."

"Well," she says, "no offence; but I shouldn't a-thought there was much difference between us, and I'm fifty-eight come Michaelmas."

I says, "Mum," I says, "you know your age, and I knows mine, but what that is is best known to myself;" for I was quite put out with 'er, not as I'm ashamed of my age, and would scorn for to put myself back; but whatever is the use of talkin' to anybody's 'usband about anyone bein' well on in life.

So I was werry cool to that lady, female I should call 'er, for in the course of the day I consider she behaved werry much like ono.

I don't think much of the view as you gets of

London from the railway, and them tan-pits is stiflin' to me.

Certingly the Crystial Palis looks werry fine as you gets glimpses on it a-goin' along, and so is the country round ; but a railroad always does that scarify me, that I never takes no pleasure in what's a-goin' on about me, tho' I'm thankful as Brown 'ad a little somethink for refreshment, which I took along with 'alf a currant roll, as a stay ag'in faintness, as it was past my dinner 'our already

When we got to the Palis, I thought I was all right, tho' the fust flight of steps was fatiguin', and the crowds unpleasant ; but, law bless you, when you're out of the railway your trouble's only beginnin', for there was passages as was tedious, and werry oppressive in 'eat, thro' bein' all under glass, and the flights of stairs at the end took my breath clean away, and my legs tottered under me.

When we got reg'lar into the place, it certingly was werry grand, and the fust thing as I see was a lot of dried savages, with no clothes to speak on, and in my opinion much better under ground than above it.

So we walks along, and certingly it was werry beautiful, with plants a-growin', and water a-flowin', and beautiful things to look at, tho' I can't think why they should ever stick sich a lot of them figgers all about the place, with 'ardly a rag to their backs,

as is not in the least like real 'uman bein's, as far as my ideas goes.

I'm sure it would 'ave been quite treat enough for me if they'd a let me alone in a lovely cheyney shop as were there, for I never see sich things for beauty; but law, that wasn't nothink to the French goods, and all manner of other foreign ways, with a 'ouse as belonged to a party in the name of Pompey, as was a uncomfortable place with no roof, and bare walls, as must 'ave been chilli in the winter.

And there was insides of churches, and statutes, and tombs all over the place; but what struck me most was one of them 'eathen gods, leastways there was a pair of 'em, a enormous size, and that ugly, as nobody in their senses wouldn't think of worshipping 'em; but as I says, them foreigners will do anythink in my opinion.

Of all the places to tire anybody, that Crystial Palis is the place, as you may prove easy, for if they don't 'ave chairs on wheels for to take parties about in, as at fust I thought was cripples, till I see one on 'em get out, which is a thing I could never bring my mind to for to let a fellow-creature be a-drivin' me about, as long as I'd a leg to stand on, which if you 'ave but one is a illconvenient place for them as is visited by a wooden leg, like the man as comes round with our cat's-meat, for such a cracks in the floor to catch things between the boards; I never

did thro' their bein' that wide apart, and saw with my own eyes the old gent as was brought up short, thro' 'is umbreller a-catchin' in 'em, and made 'im go backwards on the lady as 'ad 'er parysol up thro' the sun a-dazzlin', and brought on words 'tween 'im and the lady's 'usband.

And as to 'avin' your dress trod on, it's downright wonderful, and you would say done a-purpose, and thro' me feelin' faint, in fact, devourin' 'ungry, I really did think as I must 'ave give in.

So I says, "Brown, I'm not a 'eavy feeder," I says, "but," I says, "there is cravin's as must be satisfied;" and he says, "All right, we dines at three," which I'm thankful to say was near, and we made our ways to the dinin'-room, as was down ag'in two or three flights of stairs; but I can't complain of the dinner, as were cold, with salid, and as nice a pie as ever you tasted, all but for the black pepper, as I never puts in myself; for as I always says, anyone can add, tho' none can take away.

There was too much scrumblin' for me, as I says to a lady as was next to me, I says, "I likes the quiet of my 'ome, and relishes the little as I do take."

She says to me, "Try the biled beef," as was a very fine piece, but hacked shameful, and when I did taste it, I says, "Thank you," I says, "it's much too 'ard for to suit the 'uman tooth, as is not

accustomed," and therefore confined my attentions to cold lamb, as was cut to the bone, but suited me bein' tender, and I'm partic'lar partial to a bit of brisket.

There was some beautiful fruit tarts as would 'ave been all the better if I could 'ave got a clean plate ; but we managed pretty well, and so finished up with a bit of cheese, and I do think as nice a draught of bottled stout as ever I tasted, and then we got out into the gardens, where we took a little out of Brown's pocket bottle, for cold wittles is apt to lay 'eavy, and them gardens would be all the easier to the feet if the gravel walks was rolled ; but we 'urried on, for they was a-goin' to play the water works.

Certingly wonderful they was, only I should 'ave seen them all the better if I'd been up above in the balcony, for I was quite stood afore, and when I did get a good view, thro' people a-movin', the wind brought the water all over me, and reg'lar damped me down as I may say, and it came so sudden that I couldn't run quick enough, leastways, thro' bein' confused, I run the wrong way, and got more of the wet, which set some parties a-grinnin', as in my opinion 'ad took more than was good for them, for there was a-deal more rompin' than I 'olds with, and so I said to that party as 'ad made 'erself so free about my age, for she was a-goin' on

in a way as I don't approve on, and a-makin' fun of 'er 'usband, as was decided a little on, tho', for my part, I thinks it was thro' the old gent a-smokin', as he didn't seem to do natural; but only 'cos others was, and he a-likin' to do as he was done by.

So this party comes up to me with a grin, and says, "Ain't you a-goin' to join the young 'uns at kiss-in-the-ring?"

I says, "No, mum," quite short.

She goes on a-jeerin', "What a pity," she says, "so young as you are."

I says, "Mum, I may not be very young; but I'm old enough to know better than to make myself ridiculous, like some parties."

So she says, "What do you mean by parties?"

I says, "That's my affairs," I says; "but if you was to take my advice, you'd keep quiet, for you're excitin' yourself far more than is prudent with this hot weather."

"Well, mum," she says, "if you mean them remarks at me, all I've got to say is that I'm not a-goin' to be talked to like that, tho' you are in liquor."

Oh! the idea of sayin' such a thing to me, it put me out to that degree, that I couldn't 'ardly keep my 'ands off 'er.

I says, "You're a downright good for nothin' " I don't know what I was goin' to say, when parties

come between us, and Brown he come up and took me away ; but I was that 'urt at them insults as I'd 'ad to bear, that I wouldn't listen to anything for ever so long.

Somehow or other the band began to play, and I managed to get a seat, and the air was more cooler than it 'ad been, and I really did enjoy myself, and should 'ave been quite 'appy but for thirst, which is not to be squenched by ardent sperrits.

So at last I says, "Brown," I says, "I'm a downright starvin' for my tea."

"Well, we can 'ave it, whenever you please," says he ; "but we must go and fetch it, for it won't come to us."

I says, "Certingly not, Brown ; who ever expected it would ; but," I says, "I should like to 'ear a little more music."

"Oh !" he says, "they'll play all the evenin'."

I says, "Poor fellows, how tired they must be."

"Nonsense," says Brown, "it's their trade."

"Oh !" I says, "well that does make a difference ; but some is so fond of music, that they'll play all day, and any day too, that is foreigners will," for I've seen them 'talian boys with organs, and men too, a-playin' till late at night and in the pourin' rain.

I certingly was that tired, as made me 'obble to the tea place, where they give it us very fair ; but,

in my opinion, it 'ad been biled, for it 'ad a taste about it as I didn't 'old with.

So I took a bit of bread and butter, for tea is a nasty rakin' thing if took alone, but the butter was that bad, as I called it cart grease, as made Brown very rude, he says, "All the better, your wheels wants a-greasin'," alludin' to me not bein' that nimble as I might be in gettin' along.

I says, "Brown," I says, "we ain't a-goin' a-paradin' into that Palis no more, for tho' that transcrip is werry grand where they played the big organ, and tho' them gardens is lovely, I couldn't walk no more was it ever so;" for my feet was that swelled, as they was a-bustin' all over my shoes.

So Brown, he convoyed me to a seat as was near the entrance, and told me to wait till he come for me; and there I set, and tho' there wasn't much to look at except parties as passed and the side view of the Palis, as is werry imposin', I didn't seem to think how the time was a-goin'.

When it was a-gettin' dusk, I begun to get uneasy thro' Brown not a-comin'; so I gets up and speaks to a perliceman, and asks 'im if 'e'd see a party a-answerin' to Brown's description go out; as said as he thought he 'ad, tho' not certain, but he says, "'Ave you got a ticket?"

I says, "Yes."

"Then," says he, "you'd better go by the train

up to London Bridge, 'cos if he's gone, he'll be waitin' for you, and if you gets there first you can wait for 'im, as is a place not so likely to miss as here."

Well, I didn't 'ardly know what to do, so thought as I would go, and so I did; but, law bless you, the crowdin' and crushin' to get to a carriage was awful. I was werry nigh smashed more than once, and it was only by accident, I may say at last, as I got reg'larly pitched into a carriage, with my things 'arf off my back, and in my struggle the sleeves was torn clean out of my musling, as I can't match it for a new body. Well, when we got to the London Bridge Station, talk of lookin' for Brown it was ridiculous; that perliceman must have been a born fool, for the crowd was tenfold greater than down there, for when the trains come in I waited and waited in vain, and no Brown.

Well, at last I was settin' almost asleep, when a porter comes up, and says, "What are you waitin' for, mum?"

"My 'usband," says I.

"Where from?" says he.

"Crystial Palis," says I.

"Last train's in," says he.

"What's o'clock?" says I.

"Just one," says he.

"Why, 'owever can that be?" says I.

"You've been a-settin' a-noddin' 'ere this ever so long," says he.

"Noddin'," says I, "never;" but so I must 'ave been, for it was one o'clock in the mornin'.

So I starts up, and if it 'adn't been as I made a bargain with a cabman on London Bridge to take me to Whitechapel Church for a-shillin', as was all the money I 'ad about me, I don't think as I ever should 'ave got 'ome at all.

As I turned into our street a downright cripple, who should I meet but Brown a-comin' to meet me, for not findin' me at 'ome he thought as somethink was wrong, but I shouldn't 'ave minded anythink if Brown 'adn't said it was all my fault, thro' me a-leavin' the seat where he'd put me; but it was no use a-arguin' with 'im then, and thankfnl I was to get to bed, tho' I'm sure it will be days before I get a shoe on again. And as to the Crystial Palis, it's all werry well in its way, but in my opinion, no one can go over it in a day, and in fact I'm that bewildered, that I 'ardly remembers what I did see there; and, for my own part, I'd much rather 'ave a day in Eppin' Forest, for the shameful scrougin' as there is to get away from that Palis is downright ruin to everythink.

VII.

MRS. BROWN SPENDS A HAPPY DAY AT
ROSHERVILLE.

WE was settin' at work a-unpickin' my puce satinette, a-talkin' me and Mrs. Pollin', when she says to me, "I wonders, Mrs. Brown, as you and your good gentleman never takes a trip to Rosherweel, 'cos," she says, "I'm told it's the place to spend a 'appy day."

"Ah," I says, "Mrs. Pollin', 'appy days is a bubble," I says, "and one as may give way, so didn't ought for to rest upon."

She says, "Ah, you may well say so, for," she says, "them as looks to it is sure to be shipwrecked in their 'opes."

I says, "Right you are," I says, "Mrs. Pollin', for none on us can tell what a day may bring forth, nor what sorrows and wexations is in store for us when we gets up, afore as ever we lays our 'eads on our pillers, for I'm sure I never shall forget that

day as I was robbed of that half sovereign by that wagabond with the sprats, as will kindle in my 'art to my dyin' day, it will."

So she says, "'Ow was that?"

I says, "You surely must 'ave 'eard me speak of that scores and scores of times."

She says, "Never to my knowledge," tho' I remembers well a-tellin' 'er it over a bit of work once before.

So I says, "It does not signify, and as it will bear 'earin', for it did ought to be a warnin' to all parties as trusts in their simpleness to fair words, for a more civil, nice spoken young man I never see, nor finer sprats, a thing to which I'm partial; but a little goes a long way with me, tho' Brown he can make a meal on 'em."

Well, it's goin' on for three years now, for it was in November, and a Thursday, let me see, was it a Thursday? yes, I think it were, leastways it was well on in the week, for I know as I'd got my washin' and ironin' under, as 'ad been that trouble thro' bein' obliged to dry in-doors, and never dare 'ave a thing about when Brown comes in; but I'd been that busy as I 'adn't thought of anythink for supper, as Brown was a-comin' into at nine o'clock.

Well, just as I was a-sayin' to myself, as time was a-gettin' on, it bein' on the stroke of eight, I

thought as it was too late for a baked potato, as does beautiful in the Dutch oven, but requires time; and I was a-thinkin' whatever could I get, when I 'ears, "Yah! sprats," a-comin' down the street.

So I goes to the door, tho' a stiflin' fog, and 'olds up my candle, and 'ollers, "Hi!" and the young man comes across with as beautiful a basketful as ever you see, a-brimmin' over, and sparklin' like silver, with their eyes red as fire, as is their 'abits in frost.

So I says, "I'll have a good plate of picked ones," for, he says a penny a plate, take 'em as they comes, but three 'alfpence picked; and knowin' as Brown liked 'em, I 'ad two plates, a-thinkin' of vinegar if they should prove too many.

Well, mum, you never see a nicer dish than they looked, for I give myself quite a chill a-seein' as they was all picked the best; and when I come to pay, I quite forgot as I 'adn't a farthin' of change but a 'alf-a-sov'rin.

So I says, "Dear me," I says, "whatever shall I do, I ain't got no money. 'Ave you change for 'alf-a-sov'rin?"

So the young man says, "No, but I'll get it for you in a instant at the public-'ouse."

Well, I certingly did 'esitate, so he says, "I'll leave my basket and all the fish."

Well, I didn't wish to 'urt 'is feelin's as to show

I thought he might be a thief, besides I looked on the fish as worth the money, so I gives 'im the 'alf sov'rin and stood at the door, the basket on the step, and with the door 'alf shet, and a draught as nearly blowed out the candle; and there I stood a-waitin' and a-waitin', but no young man.

So just as I was thinkin' as p'r'aps change were scarce, for Mrs. Freemin at the shop couldn't give it me that werry arternoon when I went for the wood, up who should come but Brown.

He says, "What's this caper," he says; "'ave you set up in the sprat line, Martha?"

I says, "None of your nonsense, Brown."

He says, "What does it mean?"

"Mean," I says, "why, sprats for your supper."

"What," he says, "all this basket full."

"No," I says, "don't be so ridiculous; I'm a-waitin' till the young man comes back with the change."

"Change for what," says he. "Why, for 'arf-a-sov'rin to be sure," says I.

And if Brown didn't bust out a-larfin' like a maniac, and says, "Well, if you're not done pretty Brown this time, it's a pity."

I says, "Don't be so foolish, Brown, don't," for I was put out at 'is laughture, and felt a sort of a misgivin' within myself, and I says, "Of course it's

all right, the young man wouldn't go for to leave 'is own property behind like that," I says.

"Oh, wouldn't he," says he; "why, what do you think the lot is worth?"

"Well," I says, "a pound at least."

"Why, if they was worth that," says Brown, "'ow could you get sich a lot for threepence?"

Well that never struck me; but law, it give me sich a turn, I werry near let the candle drop into the basket and quite staggered to a chair, and Brown he was forced to give me just a drain, for I turned dead faint, and I would run as far as the Catherine Wheel to see if he'd been there, but they'd seen nothink on 'im, tho' the man as was round with the beer said as he met two roughs a-boltin' by 'im, as was a-larfin' and sayin' as "Wouldn't the old gal 'oller."

Well, I come back downright ready to cry with wexation. But Brown he laughed and said, "Never mind, it won't ruin us, old gal, and may be a warnin' to you."

Then he set to and briled some for 'is own supper, for I couldn't bear to look at 'em, and then he says as 'e'd bury the rest.

I says, "No," I says, "pickled their delicious;" and he says, "Pickles, why they'll take more vinegar than they're worth;" and I was wexed I couldn't touch a bit of supper, nor 'ardly get to sleep for

thinkin' on 'em, and Brown he tried some a second time, but they didn't do, so he did bury 'em, except a few as the cat fancied ; and all as I ever got out of that was ninepence, as I sold the basket for to the party as comes round with 'arthstones, and every time as I heard sprats all that winter and the next, I run to the door to look out for my gentleman, as I should know among a thousand, for 'e'd very short cut 'air, and a red 'ankercher round 'is neck, with a remarkable 'oarse voice, brought on I've heard thro' a-callin' so much.

I was wexed, not so much for the loss of the money, as bein' made sich a fool on, and Brown so irritatin' in 'is ways, a-sayin' whenever he give me any money, "No more of your sprats, Martha."

Well, Mrs. Pollin', poor thing, she told me as she were served jest the same by a 'alf crown as she trusted to the man as ground her scissors, so I suppose it's their ways, the wagabones.

I says to 'er, I says, "Law, 'ow the tongue do run on ; whatever was we a-talkin' about, as led to them sprats ?" so she says, "Rosherville."

"Ah !" I says, "no doubt it was the thought of the water as brought them into my 'ead."

"Well," says Mrs. Pollin', "we're a-goin' there on Monday, for it's my 'usband's bean-feast, thro' 'im bein' a glass-blower ;" and she says, "the tickets is three-and-sixpence, includin' everythink,

except what you may call for in the way of drink, which is extra."

So I says, "Well, nobody can call that dear for a pleasant day and a good dinner," and repeats it to Brown, knowin' as he is particular partial to a bean, tho', for my part, I think they're a thing as is fillin' at the price, and do not 'old with eatin' them as beans, but only as a vegetable.

Brown, he wasn't much in a 'umour, so he says, quite short, "Beans, be blowed!"

I says, "Mr. Brown, if you're a-goin' to forget as you're a talkin' to a lady," I says, "we'd better drop it," and so we did.

But a few days arter, he said to me, "What was you a-botherin' about a bean-feast at Rosher-ville?"

So I says, "No, Brown, I were not a-botherin' but merely a-mentionin' as it were a-comin' off, thro' Mrs. Pollin' a-goin', as is 'er only treat with 'er 'usband once a year."

"Well," he says, "you can go if you like. I can't spare the time."

I says, "No, Brown, never; I did it but once," I says, "thro' a-missin' you accidental; but never no more," I says, "for better or for worse;" I says, "we goes together or we don't go; but none of your supperations for me."

"Then," says Brown, "I shall only be able

to manage it by undertakin' some business early, for a party near Charin' Cross, as will set me free for the day, and it's no use of draggin' you there, all out of the way, in fact you couldn't do it."

Well, just as we was discussin' in who should come but Jane and 'er 'usband, as no sooner 'eard about Rosherville, than they said as they'd go and take the children, as the doctor said they wanted change of air.

Well, I 'ad my misgivin's, I 'ad, about that boy Alfred, and, in fact, it's my opinion, as 'ome is the place for children; but I didn't say nothink, and it was settled as we should go and meet at London Bridge, where the boat started from, Brown a-goin' on to Charin' Cross first, tho' I did not relish it; but was forced to give way, for I never could 'ave been ready in time.

Well, I starts Brown off all right that Monday, and then sets to work to be ready myself. I wore my blue barege with my yellar cheyney crape shawl, and my leghorn, as 'ad cleaned wonderful, with a new linin' of light blue, and a flower to come ag'in the face.

I'd a pair of shoes as was that easy as a child might 'ave wore 'em, bein' a kind of webbin', as gives no pressure to the foot; but, somehow or other, I never was so long a-dressin', for, what with

laces a-breakin', and strings wantin' runnin' thro', I'd my 'ands pretty full, I can tell you, and it was on the stroke of 'alf-past nine as I turned out of our street.

Mrs. Pollin', as I called for, she'd gone off without me, as I didn't think friendly in 'er; but that's the world, that is, tho' she had borrowed my black velvet mantle, 'cos she 'adn't nothink to wear, as went well with 'er dress, and if I'd known 'ow she was a-goin' for to rig 'erself out, no mantle of mine would she 'ave wore, for I quite blushed to see it on 'er shoulders, and never shall wear it ag'in with comfort.

So, findin' I was late, I thought to get a bus, but, bless you, they was that loaded as it were out of the question, and they was that insultin', a-offerin' me outside places, and one feller, as I stopped, gave me gross insults, 'cos he was a-comin' away from the City.

Well, I 'urried on that fast as my legs seemed a-givin' way under me, and my shoes, thro' bein' large, would not keep on as I could wish; but at last, thro' inquiries, I gets to where the steamer starts from, and a bell was a-ringin', and I rushes down, and, dear me, the boats was crowded, and a-puffin' and a-steamin', till really my 'ead was quite turned.

I got aboard, and they was jest off, me 'avin'

seated myself, makin' sure as Brown were there, when I 'eard a voice exclaim, "Hallo, Martha, where are you a-goin' to?"

I turns round, and there was Brown aboard another steamer, as was next door, as I may say, to where I was.

Jane says, "If you stops there you'll be took to Margate."

Goodness me, what a turn it give me, for we was just off.

"Come over 'ere," says Brown.

"I can't," says I.

"You must," says he, "or you'll be took to Margate."

I says, "Let 'em dare take me anywheres ag'in my will, and I'll 'ave the law of them."

"Bosh," says Brown, "come out of that," and before I could 'ardly turn me round, he'd got 'old of me by the arm, and was a-pullin' on me till nearly my arm-'oles give way.

A lady as was settin' by, she calls to a man and makes room for me to stand up on the seat, and I was that terrified, for the boat seemed to be a-movin', and I couldn't 'ardly get my leg up, but Brown he gave me a jerk as was brutal, and I felt my things a-tearin' as I pitched forward, and if it 'adn't been as I dropped on to a sailor's back as was a-stoopin' doin' up a lump of ropes, as we

fell upon together, I might 'ave been pitched 'ead foremost goodness knows where.

Well, I was that shocked as I felt as if 'evan and earth 'ad come together, and the sailor he used low-lived language, as might 'ave been expected from 'is station, but what riled me was a lot of grinnin' fools as laughed, and Brown a-joinin' with 'em, which was encouragement to that boy Alfred, but I do think 'is mother might 'ave knowed better; but I wouldn't show 'em as I was 'urt, tho' obliged for to go into the ladies' cabin to be set to rights by Jane, and the little drop as I took composed my nerves, and I felt more myself, and so I went on the deck, which was that crowded as you couldn't pick nor choose your seat, but I managed to get one thro' Mrs. Pollin' as 'ad some friends as was goin' to dance thro' there bein' a band on board; not as I thought much of their dancin', and never do I remember gettin' such kicks; and was compelled for to set a-drawin' up my feet constant like a infant in pain, thro' the way as the 'eels kep' a-comin' down on my corns.

Certingly the company was very pleasant, and Mrs. Pollin' she was in 'igh spirits, but, as to her dress, I never did see such a guy in my born days, for she's not one as can bear dress, bein' one of them mean figgers as don't set nothink off well, whilst there is those you know as looks well in any.

think ; in fact, I've 'ad said to myself, for parties 'as said, "Mrs. Brown, mum, you'd look well in a sack."

Mrs. Pollin', she's as thin as a thread paper, and in a remarkable scanty pink dress, a kind of a musling, as she took two breadths out of, thro' their bein' stained when it was a evenin' dress, and I told 'er never could look well ; and as to 'er bonnet, as was far from clean, tho' blue transparent, it looked all the worse for a white feather, a thing as I don't 'old with, no more than a white bugle collar as made my mantle look a dingy brown, nor white boots, as I told 'er made 'er foot, as is a wide, lumpy foot, look larger than ever ; but that's the worst of bein' in the second'and line, you are so apt to be led away by things as do not suit you, which I'm sure those deep red flowers didn't her face, which is white, 'air, eyes, and all, except the nose as is, you may say, like a full-blow'd poppy for colour ; but she didn't seem to take my remarks in that friendly sperrit as I could 'ave wished, and would 'ave intended 'em.

Well, certingly the river is wonderful, and to see the ships in the docks in the distance, you can't think how they ever got 'em in, and as to gettin' 'em out ag'in I should say they never could, they seems that wedged together as it struck me one time as I went over 'em. Well, as we passed

Greenwich 'Ospital, as Brown showed me, a-lookin' that glorious, and always reminds me of Lord Nelson, as was a 'art of oak indeed, and put his telescope to 'is blind eye, so as not to notice the French a-comin' on, as shot 'im from the mast-'ead, and I've seen the werry coat in the painted 'all at Greenwich, as is reg'lar riddled with shot thro' and thro', tho' I should say as it was moths myself; and I says to a lady as was settin' next me, "What a blessin' it is to think on their bein' that comfortable." She says, "Who?"

I says, "The sick;" and she says, "There ain't many sick there except from old age."

I says, "Excuse me, mum," I says, "a 'ospital is for the sick all the world over."

"Oh! dear no," she says, "it's for the aged sailors, leastways it do ought to be, tho' there's a many there as don't ought to be allowed to stop."

I says, "Nonsense," I says, "they'd only be too glad to be able for to get away," as well I know thro' my own niece, as was near six weeks in the London 'Ospital with her knee-joint, and would go out tho' brought down to crutches.

So this put that party out, and she says, "Mum, you don't know what you're a-talkin' about," and we was gettin' quite to words, when Brown comes up, and of course goes ag'in his own flesh and blood, as the sayin' is, and told me to 'old my jaw.

I was ready to cry with vexation, but I didn't, 'cos that would 'ave pleased 'em as was glad to 'umble me, but I never spoke another word to that party till after dinner, when she was took that bad as I 'ad to undo 'er; which I think was a judgment on 'er for 'er rudeness.

We passed by Woolwich, which is the 'ulks as they puts the convicts aboard, and we see a many steamers, as I 'eard a young man say as was iron, a-tellin' it to a werry nice young gal, as he was evident werry sweet upon.

So I says to 'er, I says, "Iron sinks and wood it floats; so don't you believe 'im, my dear," and spoke jokin' like, but, law bless you, mum, he was up and so was she, and snapped my nose off with their answers, a-talkin' about improvements, and ignorance, and all manner.

So I made up my mind as I wouldn't speak no more, and I didn't, tho' p'r'aps if I 'ad, that young woman wouldn't 'ave 'ad 'er collar blowed overboard, as I see she 'adn't got fastened secure.

Well, at last we was landed at Rosherweel, and got ashore by degrees, and certingly it's a nice place to look at, and when you gets into the Gardens it's downright noble to look at. Such walks, which tho' pebbly to the foot is pleasant to the eye, and there was gold and silver peasants caught from the

country in cages, and there was graven images a-standin' about 'oldin' lamps, and fountings a-playin' small but pretty, rather too many steps to please me, which Mrs. Pollin' says is owin' to it's 'avin' been dug out of a chalk pit, and that is the reason as the flowers is so beautiful. I says, "Oh, indeed," as it is a thing as I never know'd afore, as they grow in chalk, and I'll try it with my nester-cheums as I've got in a pot at my back parlour winder, and never don't thrive as I should like to see 'em, but it was painful walkin' thro' my shoes being that baggy at the sides, and the pebbles could not be kep' out, tho' I did stop several times to shake 'em.

At last we got to Baronial 'All, where the dinner was a-bein' laid, and it is a noble place, I must say; and there was a theatre contagious to it, where they was to perform in the afternoon, and a platform for dancin' on, and there was waxwork and conjurin', and photographs, and all other kinds of tricks; not as I cared for 'em thro' 'avin' seen better; and as to settin' for my picter, I told Brown as I didn't care for it, but he was done, so was Jane and the baby, and Barnes, and they all come out very nice I must say for sixpence. So I was over persuaded, and went in to where a bit of a youth as 'ad his fingers grimed with dirt, turned me about and worked away with a box as he kep'

a-slidin' things in and out of; well, there I sat like on the monument for patience and immovableness; but law, when I see myself, I never did, why, my face was as broad as a warmin'-pan, and lookin' as old as my own grandmother, to say nothink of the squint as they'd give me.

I says, "Mrs. Pollin'," I says, "is that like me?" I says.

She replies, "The werry image," and parties as was standin' round laughed, and said it was wonderful.

One young chap says to me, "You know, mum, the sun don't take no flatterin' likenesses." "Then," I says, "it's a pity as the father don't attend to 'is own business, and not leave it to a boy like that to disfigger parties."

Well, Brown did aggravate me by pretendin' as it was like, and sayin' as he'd wear it next 'is 'art, and all that rubbish; and I own I was quite put out, and that thirsty, as I said to Brown, "I must have a draught," and so we 'ad some of their ale, as is werry fair, but disgraceful small bottles for the price.

Well, at last it was dinner-time, and a werry nice dinner they give us to look at, but all cold, and I didn't care for it, except the beans and bacon, but the bacon it was not to my fancy, and in my opinion the beans was full old, for they was as full big, and

was that wrinkled as they looked for all the world like the top of Mrs. Challen's thumb after a 'ard day's wash, with a skin like leather, and thro' the weather bein' warm the cold meat was not quite what it should 'ave been; but, as Mrs. Pollin' says, it must be work either for the teeth or the nose this time of year, which is true.

Well, there was some pastry as I didn't particular care about, as I'm not one for sweets. I made my dinner off my bread and cheese, and the beer was werry refreshin', tho' I do think it was that as made me so sleepy.

Well, when dinner was over, we walked in the grounds, leastways I soon got a seat, and parties was all a-promenadin', and some got a-dancin', which I do not 'old with by daylight, it don't seem natural; there was some young chaps as would keep on a-tryin' to dance together, as was prevented constant by gentlemen as was masters of the ceremonies, and real gentlemen too, dressed in black quite elegant, and such worked fronts to their shirts, tho' Mrs. Pollin' did say as they was only Scotch cambric and dickeys, but that's 'er scornful ways, tho' it's my opinion as she was put out with one of the gentlemen as told 'er she was in the way, which she was thro' a-standin' up to dance, and not knowin' the steps, nor the party as danced with 'er, for neither one on 'em could get on, but

kep' a-turnin' round on one spot, and nearly throwed other parties down.

Mrs. Pollin' she come up to me, and says, "As the gentleman were a counter skipper, and that she did used to be a beautiful dancer, and always considered so."

I says, "Well, then, mum, I think it's a pity as you didn't show your knowledge jest now instead of makin' of yourself a ridiculous exhibition."

"Well, mum," she turns on me with a sneer, and says, "p'r'aps you'd like to show your elegant figger in the waltz."

"Well," I says, "p'r'aps I might, mum, if I was dressed out like some parties as looks as if they was a-goin' to dance with the sweeps, and wouldn't look decent but for borrowed plumes."

"So," she says, "if by borrowed plumes you alludes to this rubbishin' old cotton velvet rag,"—she'd got it over her arm—and says, "it 'ave spilt my dress, as I've been told scores of times to-day, take it," she says, and throws it at me, and the scraggy wretch as she looked without it, would have made me pity a dog.

Well, mum, one word brought on another, and 'er 'usband he come up and used sich words to me as seemed to go to my werry 'art.

So I calls out to Brown as was passin' just then, but instead of takin' my part, as any man would as

is a man, he was quite friendly with Pollin', and says, "Don't mind what a parcel of women is jaggerin' about, let's 'ave a glass."

It was too bad of Brown, for Pollin' 'ad took as much as he could carry already.

Well, I sat werry lonely, for Jane and me 'ad a few words afore dinner about Alfred, as I corrected, tho' in speech only, thro' his bein' that mischievous and forward, like a-gettin' behind me a-fillin' of my ridicule with stones, me bein' unawares, and feelin' it a-gettin' heavier, I says, "Whatever is it," as I shouldn't a-minded if the ribbin' 'adn't been and broke sudden thro' the weight of them stones and things smashed, as I always carries for conveniency sake, and the cork come out of the little flat bottle, and good liquor wasted.

So I calls the waiter, and I 'ad a little drop warm and with a slice of lemon, as I felt did me good, and I sat there over it some time a-watchin' of the parties as was full of their games, but some a deal too free for me, and as it was a-gettin' duskish, Brown he comes and asks me if I'd like to see the ballet in the theatre.

So I says, "I should," for I'm sure I've 'eard enough about, as is a subject 'im and Barnes is wranglin' over constant; but I never know'd it was introduced in theatres, as is places I don't 'old with, but he only says, "Come."

There was such a-scrugin' as you never see; "But," he says, "come to the door," and so I did; but, law bless you, the pushin' and the 'eat, unless you paid extra for a preserved seat, it was quite impossible to undergo, but I'd quite enough of it what I did see, thro' the door as give me a crick in my neck, thro' 'oldin' my 'ead sideways so long, and, as I said to Brown, "I'm sure there's nothink to be seen as is worth the trouble," for there was a lot of young fieldmales as was kickin' up their legs in a way as I don't 'old with. So I says, "Let's get away, I've 'ad enough of this."

"Well," says Brown, "what will you 'ave?"

I says, "Well, I don't mind if I do 'ave a little red port wine negus, with a slice of lemon and nutmeg," which I 'ad to myself, thro' Brown a-preferrin' 'ot rum-and-water, which I took to my seat, and set there a-sippin', and when I'd finished it I kep' there quite quiet, and p'r'aps a little dozy, when I 'ears a loud crack of a explosion, as tho' powder mills 'ad gone off under my nose.

It gave me sich a turn, it's lucky I put the tumbler down, or it would 'ave been shivered. Well, I starts up with a wild scream and cries murder, and round me comes a lot of good-for-nothink young scamps a-grinnin' like monkeys, and there was that Alfred a-standin' a-laughin' like mad.

Well, mum, it did put me up to think as a

boy like that should set light to me, 'is own mother's brother's wife, 'is aunt, I may say, by accumulation. So I dashes at 'im and give 'im such a box on the ear as sent 'im 'owlin'.

I was sorry for it the next instant, for the boy's own sake, let alone the row as was raised all around, for one 'ollers out, "What do you go a-ittin' the boy like that, as didn't do it?"

"You do ought to be ashamed of yourself," says the fieldmale, "and if I was 'is mother I'd let you know the reasons why;" and so 'is mother did, for she come a-bustlin' up, as white as a sheet, for she's one of 'em as turns white thro' passion, and she says, "'Ow dare you 'it the boy, Mrs. Brown?"

I says, "Jane," I says, "be pacified."

"Don't Jane me," says she, "'ow dare you 'it my child, you bad tempered old wretch," says she, a-screamin'.

I says, "Do be quiet, think of that blessed baby."

"Much you care for the baby," says she, "you'd better strike that."

Well, Barnes he come up and tried for to make peace, but that only seemed to irritate Jane the more; and what with 'er yellin', and Alfred a-'owlin', the little girl a-cryin', and the baby a-screamin', and everybody a-talkin', I thought I should 'ave gone wild.

Well, I was that infuriated that I starts up and rushes away from the lot.

Certingly I did try to enjoy peace and quiet about the place, but there wasn't such a thing to be 'ad, for even the dark walks was quite frequented.

So I really felt about as dull as ever I felt in my life, and was quite lonely, and thinkin' as I should 'ave liked my tea, but Jane and me 'ad agreed as we should only be a-payin' thro' the nose for what we could get better at 'ome, but I really did feel faint thro' not 'avin' fancied my dinner, and thought I'd go back to my seat, and so I did, and there I set a-wonderin' whatever pleasure parties could take in that dancin', as seems to me nothink but twirlin's and twistin's as makes one giddy to look at; but what I did not 'old with was the rompin' as went on, and kiss-in-the-ring, as is low lived, and I says to a young fellar as was goin' it too free, "as he did ought to be ashamed of 'isself," he 'ollers out as I wanted to be in the game; and if one young scamp didn't get behind me and put 'is 'ead into the small of my back and run me all along the garden, and the more I screamed the more parties laughed, till I laid about me with my umbreller pretty free, I can tell you.

Jest as I was a-recoverin' of my breath, all of a sudden I 'eard a scream as I thought I know'd the voice on, and people a-runnin', so I jumps up and

'astens to the spot jest in time to see Mrs. Pollin' as was tryin' to separate Pollin' and another fellar as was fightin' ; but, law bless you, mum, she 'adn't no chance, nor more 'adn't I, for the crowd rushed in on every side to look, and we was mauled preciously. I got a blow in the face from Pollin' accidental, my bonnet was smashed disgraceful, and as to my gown it was tore, and the string of my 'air broke and fell down, and was trampled in the crowd, and I lost it, and in my strugglin' for to get my arms up, and altogether I was nearly tore to bits; and then I see the perlice a-takin' off Pollin', and Mrs. Pollin' a-shriekin' like wild till they was obligated to take 'er too.

So I says, "Perliceman," I says, "leave her alone, she's a friend of mine, and not a-doin' no wrong, but only a-standin' up for 'er 'usband, as a true woman should," I says.

The perliceman he says, "You mind your own business, old lady, or else I shall lock up the lot of you till you're sober."

"Sober," I says, "you willin, prove your words."

"All right," he says, "it's only your tea as is gone the wrong way, and got into your 'ead."

It give me sich a awful turn that I nearly went off, and as I told the lady as assisted me to the cloak-room where I put myself to rights, I thought as it would be my death ; and thro' 'er recommenda-

tions, I 'ad a glass of somethink 'ot as seemed to bring the life into me ag'in; but what I'd seen made me that ill as I couldn't enjoy nothink no more.

So when I got out into the gardens where all was dancin' and gaiety, I met with Brown, who says, "Whatever 'ave you been up to," and I was that shattered as I couldn't speak, but only busted into tears, and said "Take me 'ome, Brown, I've been that insulted as I shall carry the remembrance to my grave;" but, law bless you, Brown's no more feelin' than a cobbler's lapstone, for if he didn't say, when I told 'im all about it, "As it was my fault a-interferin' in other people's affairs, and," he says, "it's well as they didn't lock you up, for I'd a let you 'ave stopp'd there, and then p'r'aps you'd learn not to poke your nose where it ain't wanted."

I was that enraged with Brown that I says, "You're a bad, false-'earted man, and I won't stop where you are," and I walks myself out of the place. Well, thro' bein' that flustered, I never took no notice which way as I turned, but I walked on and on, till at last I stops a party as was comin' along the road, and asks the way to the steamer.

He says, "Well, I don't know which boat you wants."

"Oh," I says, "London Bridge." "Then," he says, "you'd better walk into Gravesend, it's only a step, 'cos Rosherville, as would 'ave been nearest,

you've come away from." I says, "No more Rosherville for me."

Well, I walks on, tho' what he called a step seemed to me miles, thro' my shoes not a-keepin' on my feet, till at last I got there and reached the pier, where they was a-shoutin' "London, mum, take your ticket." Well, I 'ardly did know what I was a-doin', so I paid the money, and was no sooner on the steamer than we was off.

I set myself down, and see as the steamer went right across the river, tho' dark it was, for the days do draw in very rapid in August, and I'd no idea of the time; and when we got over, parties begun a-rushin' ashore, but I never moves till a man says, "Ain't you a-goin' by this train?"

I says, "What train?" "Why, for London," says he.

I says, "London is my destiny, certingly."

"Then," he says, "look sharp." "Why," I says, "ain't this boat a-goin' to London Bridge?" "No," says he. I says, "I'm goin' to London, tho' " "Then," says he, "be quick, or you'll miss the train," and 'urries me ashore; and I did run up the covered way to the train as fast as my legs would carry me, and 'ad to stop for my shoes ever so many times, but only to get up to the gate to 'ave it shet in my face, and to 'ear the railroad a-screamin' and a-puffin' as it went off.

"When's the next train?" I says.

"No more trains to-night," says the man.

"Whatever do you mean?" says I. "How am I to get 'ome?"

"That depends where your 'ouse is," says he.

"Condick Street, Commercial Road," says I.

"Then," says he, "you can't get there to-night."

"No!" says I, with a scream. "Whatever will Brown think?"

I was that done that I could 'ave laid me down and died. The party as I was a-talkin' to, he says, "It is awkward; but," he says, "my good lady and me lives aboard of the steamer, and we might find a corner for you."

I says, "My good man," I says, "no corners for me; I must get 'ome, if I walks there."

He says, "You can't walk," he says, "there'll be a train at six, as is carryin' up ballast, and you can go if I speaks to the guard."

Well, there I was, and whatever could I do, for all the lights was out, and the river it looked that dismal as it made me shudder; but certingly the party as spoke to me was that friendly as I shall never forget, and so was 'is good lady, as made me a cup of tea, and offered me a blanket on a bench.

I says, "I'm sure," I says, "as I shan't not sleep a winkle, that I shan't not," so I wraps my-

self up as warm as I could, and there I set a-noddin' and a-droppin' off till daylight seemed a-comin' and glad I was, for the lonely place as I was in, and the noises on the river, terrified me to death, and a-thinkin' of Brown all night long till I was glad to see as it was day.

The man he comes to say as he'd spoke to the guard, and I might go by the train, tho' ag'in orders, and 'is wife she was that kind as to make me 'ave a cup of tea afore I started, and would take nothink more than thanks, thro' bein' a wife 'erself, as she says it is 'ard to be cast on the wide world alone.

But, law, when I saw the train, I was aghasht, as I may say, for it was nothink but trucks full of stones, and a sort of a wan for goods, in which I set on a basket, and almost in darkness, a-goin' slower and slower till we stopped at Barkin', where we 'ad to wait ever so long; but, as luck would 'ave it, thro' speakin' to the guard, as was as civil a young man as ever I see, and mentionin' Commercial Road, he advised me to change into a trian as stopped at Stepney, and made it all right for me, as never before know'd what it was to be friendless.

When I did get out of the train, I was that cramped as I couldn't walk 'ardly, and got to my own door more dead than alive, to find Mrs. Coppin', as was a-makin' of breakfast, thro' expectin' Brown

in, as 'ad been out the first thing a-lookin' for me, and, as I said, it isn't as I minds anythink, but the idea of me bein' out all night, as seems to be contrary to my 'abits, and never ought to 'ave been spoke by mortal breath.

I shouldn't 'ave minded it so much, but for Mrs. Opkins oppersite, a woman as I can't a-bear, and never will speak to, a-'appenin' to be a-takin' in the milk, as I come down the street, a sight as she would glory in, I know, a mean sperrited creature.

When Brown came in, as he did shortly arter, he see by my looks as I was done up, so he spoke quite kind, and that was worse than if 'e'd scolded, and I cried fit to break my 'eart, so Brown he says, "It was all my fault, Martha;" and I says, "No, Brown, it were mine;" but he says, "Never mind, now as you're all safe; but," he says, "I can tell you I've been in a precious fright, for fear as you might 'ave fell in the river."

"So," I says, "Brown" I says, "mark my words," I says, "them as goes out in search of 'appy days anywheres must take 'appy tempers with them," and as to them gardens, tho' I must say they're very beautiful and all that, yet they did not seem to suit me from the first, and as to that boy Alfred, if ever I goes out again where he is brought, I shall deserve all as I meets with, and as bad a

cold as I got, thro' a-spendin' a 'appy day at Rosherville; and with regard to Mrs. Pollin', she's a-tipplin' red-nosed, wiper, as borrowed my clothes and treated me with spurn, as is the world, and no mistake.

VIII.

MRS. BROWN AT THE THAMES TUNNEL.

IN my opinion it did ought to be allowed, as is 'ighly dangerous in railways; but when you come to goin' under rivers, why it's werry like flyin' in the face of natur', as the sayin' is; and I'm sure the turn as it give me, let alone the fright, and the agony as it caused me, as I shall carry the marks unto my grave, as the sayin' is, and never should 'ave thought of goin' but for Mrs. Alders, thro' 'er daughter a-gettin' married to a tally-man, as is a thing I don't 'old with, never since the time as Mrs. Martins, as lived next door, told me as she paid a guinea for a cotton umbreller by the week, and everythink equal, as is out of all proportion.

So when Jemima Alders were married, that werry day there was a party made up for to go and see the sights with the young couple.

It's a good many years ago now, and a many on 'em is dead and gone, and makes me melancholy

like to think over them things, tho' it don't do to give in to them feelin's, or we shouldn't never do nothink.

It was a nice day enough as we 'ad for the weddin', not as I went to church, as I never 'ave done since Maria Corbit married a journeyman paper-'anger, as were in 'is grave within three months, and they always would 'ave as me a-wearin' a black bonnet, thro' trimmed with yellar, 'ad some-think to do with it.

So I went over to Mrs. Alders' in good time, and glad they was to see me, and, as I wouldn't take nothink but a drain to the young couple, not as the tally-man were young, thro' being full forty-five, and, as it come out, a widderer and bald.

We was werry soon started, and tho' the sun were a-shinin', the wind was cold, with the dust a-flyin' by the bushel, as they do say is worth a king's ransom, and I'm sure I wish as the king 'ad it all to 'isself, for, I'm sure, I was reg'lar blinded with it, and that blowed about, as I thought my clothes would be in ribbons, all along the Commercial Road.

We was six in party, and Mrs. Childs' little boy, as were all ricketty, and a poor 'ap'orth of cheese, a-clingin' on to 'is mother's gownd, enough to pull it out at the gethers, and as to Childs, he's next door to a fool, as was brought on thro' cleanin'

winders a second floor back, and no trussels for to support 'im, and come out a cropper, as the sayin' is, tho' saved by the sky-light, as broke 'is fall, but over three months in the 'ospital, and drags 'is foot in walkin' to this werry 'our, with a bald patch at the top of the 'ead, as 'ave shook 'is reason, I should say, for when once he begins to giggle, there aint no abuse on earth as'll stop 'im, tho' Mrs. Alders' own brother, so in course looked on as a near relation, thro' 'avin' a little bit of money as he's been and saved up, tho' they do say it were not made altogether on the square, and 'ave been know'd to show lovely jewelery; but that's nothink to me.

Brown he won't 'ave nothink to do with the lot as he calls sweeps; but me and Mrs. Alders was girls together, so, in course, I ain't a-goin' to give 'er up, tho' they do say as 'er own uncle were a body-snatcher, and made a fortin out of the lead coffins alone.

I don't 'old with a lot of people a-goin' out together, as is sure either to get a-stragglin' or to words; but we kep' pretty well together, and only stopped once on the road, as were nothink but ginger beer, and when we got to the Tunnel my 'eart misgive me, when the money was paid, to think of goin' down sich lots of stairs, as made me feel werry all-overish, partickler thro' Mrs. Childs a-

tellin' us all about the water a-comin' in, as drowned a lot of parties as were a-dinin' along with Don Miziwell, as were a Portygee gent, and did ought to 'ave been the king, and as near drowned as a toucher, and 'ad to run for their lives with their dinners in their throats, all thro' the water as were let in sudden, thro' a wessel a-lettin' down 'is anchor sudden, and knocked a 'ole thro' the bottom of the Thames, as is the top of the tunnel, tho' miles below, in course, and yet never safe.

I must say as the place struck werry damp to me, the same as it did to Mrs. Alders, as said, "It's as much as my life's worth to go any further without somethink to check the chill on the constitution as this 'ave give me."

I says, "Wherever are we to get anythink but Thames water down 'ere?"

"Oh," she says, "Jemima's 'usband 'ave got the needful," as were a straw flask, and I never did taste raw sperrits go milder down the throat, as was, no doubt, thro' our bein' under water, a'ready, as the sayin' is.

I'm sure, while they was about it, they might 'ave made that tunnel bigger, as is a narrer passage; but bein' lit up with gas looks cheerful, and all manner of things to sell about the place as is a remembrance of a visit as I'm sure I ain't likely to forget in a 'urry.

For we was a-walkin' along, and Mr. Smedley, as is the name of Jemima's 'usband, he was a-sayin' as this 'ere tunnel wasn't a flea-bite to the one as they was a-talkin' of makin' under the sea, for to go to France by dry land.

"Well," I says, "I never 'opes to go to France," for in them days I little thought ever to leave Old England; "but," I says, "if I were to 'ave to go, you wouldn't ketch me a-divin' under the sea."

"Ah!" he says, "they'll do it some day," and tho' he were laughed at in them days, I've 'eard more than one say as it's sure to be done, as is all along of the depth of that 'ere Bonyparty, as knows well as he never could conquer England by land; and as to them Frenchmen crossin' the sea, why they'd 'eave their 'earts up, as I've seen 'em myself jest a-bein' out a few for pleasure, and only fancy what a 'ole army would be; as would soon over-reach theirselves in tryin' for to seize 'old on us.

Well, as we was a-walkin' along a-listenin' to the music as were playin', and Mr. Smedley a-talkin' like a book about the way as water would find its level, when I eard a drippin' like.

So I says to Mrs. Alders, "That sounds to me like water a-drippin' constant as will wear a stone," as the sayin' is.

"Oh," she says, "no, it can't be."

"No," said Mrs. Childs, "it can't be water, for

if one drop was once to come thro', the rest would rush arter it, and we should be a deluge in a instant."

I says, " You don't mean that ? Why," I says, " I'm certain it's water."

" Then," says she, " we're lost."

" Law," I says, " where's the rest gone to ?"

" Oh," she says, " oh ! they've been and gone and left us. Oh ! wherever's Childs, and what 'ave become of Sammy ?" and if she didn't take to 'er 'cels, and run back like mad.

Well, I ketched up my gownd for to run too but my breath give in, and I don't think as I got two yards when I come to a stop, and when I come to think, I says to myself, in course this 'ere tunnel 'ave two ends, or wouldn't be a tunnel, and I must be nearer the other end than the one we come in at, and if there's a rush there'll be more at that end than this ; so I turns round and makes the best of my way to that other end.

As soon as I gets to the stairs there who should I find but Sammy Childs, a 'owlin' like mad, for 'is mother as 'ad been and wandered away.

I soon stops 'is cries, and give 'im a biscake and two apples, and then I thinks to myself I'm well out of it, and won't say nothink to any one 'ere about the water a-comin' in, as'll 'ave plenty of

time to save theirselves, and will make the best of my way up while the stairs is clear.

So I takes 'old of Sammy Childs, as I didn't like to be bothered with, tho' I certingly did think whatever I should do with 'im if the parents was drowneded, in that tunnel, and up we comes to above ground, and as soon as we was out of the place that Sammy begun, "Oh, where's my mother?"

So I says to pacify 'im, "She's a-comin'," but, law, he begun for to caper about and scream, and bite and kick like a wild beast.

So the man as was at the gate there, he says, "You did ought to give 'im a good bashin' as wants it."

"Oh!" I says, "poor little feller."

He says, "Ah, you're like all fools of mothers, give way to 'im till he'll bite your ears off at the gallers."

I says, "He ain't no child of mine, but only a friend's, as I do believe 'ave met a watery grave, down in that tunnel."

When the boy 'eard me say that, he yelled like demons, and the man says, "You must be a reg'lar old fool to frighten the child like that, there's nobody drowneded down there."

I says, "But there will be, some day."

"Oh," he says, "rubbish."

I says, "'Ow can I get to the Commercial Road?"

"Why," he says, "thro' the tunnel."

"No," I says, "I'm too thankful to be out on it safe once to trust myself back ag'in."

"Well," he says, "you might block it up p'r'aps."

I was a-goin' to say somethink sharp to 'im, but 'ad my work cut out to pacify that boy Sammy, as I could only coax away from the place with bulls' eyes and parliament, and was so 'urt by that man's remarks as I wouldn't ask 'im no more questions, but on I walks a-tellin' Sammy I was a-goin' to take 'im to 'is mother.

We'd walked a good bit, and I'd asked my way to London Bridge, in a werry respectable public where I took a glass of mild ale and a seedy biscake.

So they says, "Straight on," and off I sets, but 'adn't gone werry far when Sammy turns dead pale and faint, and says, "Oh! I can't walk no further," and down he sets on a doorstep as were 'ard by.

I says, "My dear get up," I says, "and we'll soon come to a omblebus or somethink," but there he set a-moanin'.

I couldn't do nothink for to get 'im up, and there was werry few parties about, and one or two

stopped and stared as I said, "It weren't nothink only my little boy 'ave turned faint."

One asked me where I was a-goin' to; I says, "London Bridge."

"Well," he says, "you're a good two miles from there."

I says, "Ain't there no omblebus?"

He says, "None as comes this way."

What to do I didn't know, and at last I see there wasn't nothink for it but I must carry that boy, and so I did.

I managed for to get 'im up in my arms, but law, tho' a mere shrimp for size, he was a uncommon weight.

I totters along with 'im as far as ever I could, a-'opin' to meet a 'bus, and 'ad got to where there was more people about, when if that boy didn't wake up like and begin to scream. I set 'im down and tried to pacify 'im, but, law, I might as well 'ave tried to make the winds 'ear me, for the more I spoke kind the more he 'ollered.

A reg'lar crowd come round, and the boy kep' on a-sayin', "I wants my mother, I will go to my mother, as you've been and stole me away from."

Parties a-gathered round begun to make remarks, and one says to me, "Is he your little boy?"

I says, "Oh, dear, no."

"You said as he were just now," said a field-male as come up.

"Oh, you old 'ag," she says, "I know your game."

I says, "Old, I'm only eight-and-thirty."

She says, "Old or young, you're one of them wile characters as 'tices children away to strip 'em."

I says, "You false woman, I'll make you prove your words."

Well, whether Sammy got frightened, or what it was I don't know, but he set to a-shriekin' like mad, and turned away from me a-sayin', "As he didn't know me," and certingly 'ad never set eyes on me afore that day.

Well, I was in a pretty predicament, when up come the perlice, as said they must see into it, and one on 'em took up Sammy, as strange to say were quiet immediate, as made parties as say the poor child know'd 'is real protectors, and I were 'ooted and pelted all the way to the station-'ouse, and should 'ave been torn to bits but for the perlice, and one woman with a babby at 'er breast give me a tremenjous blow on the shoulder, a-sayin', "As I stripped 'er little girl the winter afore last."

So I says, "Do I look like a party as lives by strippin' children?"

"Yes," says one, "they always dresses respectable, for to lull suspicion."

When we got to the station-'ouse, Sammy were that wore out as he fell fast asleep, and the super-intendent he took the charge, and says he must detain me, as there'd been a deal of child-strippin' lately 'ereabouts.

I says, "Won't you send anyone for me to my friends?"

"No," says they.

"Well then," I says, "let me go in a cab with a perliceman," as at last they agreed to, and I'm sure I felt that dreadful ill, thro' a-wantin' some-think, and the shock as I'd 'ad, to say nothink of the fatigue, and as to that young imp Sammy, the cab made 'im that ill, as I should 'ave pitied a dog.

When we got to Mrs. Alders', she wasn't come in, and we 'ad to wait ever so long, and when she did come, she was the worse for liquor, thro' 'avin' parted with 'er daughter, as 'ad gone to 'er lodgin's in Somers Town, and she didn't know no more about the Childs than nothink, beyond a-sayin' they was in trouble.

The perliceman said as he were satisfied, and went off at last, and then I 'ad my work cut out to sober Mrs. Alders, as a wet cloth round the 'cad, in a thorough draught, with mustard and water loo warm, brought 'er round, tho' laid up with a swelled face and a stiff neck for ten days arter, as she said

was all 'er grief, as I only says to myself, walker, as the sayin' is.

But what put me most out were that Mrs. Childs' behaviour, as come and abused me, like a pickpocket, on my own doorstep, a-sayin' as I'd been and decoyed 'er child away, as 'ad come 'ome to 'er with the mumps, as 'e'd ketched of me a-carryin' 'im.

I says, "Go along with you, I ain't got such a thing as mumps about me, as am willin' to be took afore any doctor to prove it, and must be over thirty years since I did 'ave 'em, thro' a-settin' on a crack of the door left ajar, as run thro' the 'ouse, thro' bein' a ketchin' thing.

She wouldn't listen to reason, so I took and slammed the door in 'er face, as ain't a lady's act, I allows, and wouldn't 'ave done it for the world, if I know'd as old Childs' thumb were there, as give a yell enough to wake the tomb, and danced about for all the world like a Jack in the Green.

So I 'ad 'im in like a shot, with 'is thumb in b'ilin' water, and a little drop just as a cordial, for he'd turned that dead faint, and as to 'is wife, she screeched out murder, till she nearly brought the fire-engines, and nothink kep' under but the sight of the brandy bottle, and I never was more thankful when they was both gone, after a cup of tea and no malice, and was all of a fidget for fear Brown should come in and ketch 'em.

Certingly it will be a warnin' to me not to go near that Thames Tunnel, tho' Brown did call me all the old mutton 'eads, as he could lay his tongue to, for bein' frightened, as he says can't come in; but, I says, it may ag'in the Act of Parlyment; but water's water, as they can't keep out of the Parlyment 'Ouse itself in the spring tides, so 'ow should they elsewheres; and as to Mrs. Alders, 'er and me didn't speak for years, thro' 'er a-sayin' as I spilte the weddin' party, and 'oped as I shouldn't never come near 'er ag'in, a-bringin' bad luck, as is a des-pisable false'ood; but, never mind, a' a'l I've got to say to anyone as is goin' to be married, don't spend the day in the Thames Tunnel, as is a chilly place arter all, and not water tight, let alone the stairs and stify smell.

THE END.

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